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Towards an Understanding of the Barriers Which Prevent Routine Engagement With Urban Green Space

Simon Cryer

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Declaration Statement of Originality

I certify that this dissertation consists of my own original work. All quotations from published and unpublished sources are acknowledged as such in the text. Material derived from other sources is also indicated.

The total number of words in this dissertation is 37,620. This is within the maximum wordcount of 40,000, excluding appendices and references.

Signed (Student):

Date:

Abstract

The social, environmental, and economic benefits and services derived from urban green spaces have been extensively researched and are positively recognised (Forest Research, 2010; Lee & Maheswaran, 2010; Mitchell, 2013). Indeed, an affirmative association between green space exposure and user perceptions of physical health, and mental health and wellbeing, is generally accepted (Bertram & Rehdanz, 2015; Grahn & Stigsdotter, 2010). Lee and Maheswaran (2010) argue towards a positive correlation between green space interaction and a diversity of emotional and psychological benefits, consequently improving our quality of life. However, Hitchings (2010) presents the notion that urban dwellers will most certainly be aware of these benefits, but daily habits and practices prevent the routine engagement with green space by way of preoccupation. That is, people neglect or forget to include the experience of urban green space in their day to day life.

If the universal value of urban green spaces is to be increased, and the benefits of engaging with them is to have a greater social and economic impact on urban life, then more people need to experience urban green space more often. The principle aim of this research project was to explore the barriers which prevent the routine engagement with urban green space. The methodological approach utilised: site assessments and the creation of a bespoke field data collection instrument; participant diary analysis; semi-structured interviews and focus group analysis. Shove et al's. (2010) concept of social practice theory was used to investigate and interpret common associated practices, leading to a set of recommendations for mitigation or intervention relating to improving the wider incorporation of green space within people's daily routines. As an expedient output of the research, the recommendations should be considered by decision makers involved with policy, place management, urban landscape design, social groups, commercial business, and institutions.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

There are now more people living in urban environments than in rural areas for the first time in history (UN, 2014). Recent estimates suggest that four billion people (approximately fifty four per cent of the global population) now reside in urban areas, with growth universally expected to continue (UN, 2014; WHO, 2015). The global population is predicted to breach nine billion by the midpoint of the twenty first century, with approximately sixty six per cent of people living in urban regions (Grewal & Grewal, 2012; Herrero & Thornton, 2013; UN, 2015). This concentrated and rapid population growth has initiated a reactionary mass expansion of the built environment, with planners and decision makers perhaps caught unprepared and ill-equipped to offer sufficient provision for urban living (Landry, 2007; Shen et al., 2012). Consequently, competition for land use is intense, provoking an urgency surrounding the need to provide services and facilities which support housing, employment, health, transport, education, food, leisure, and associated infrastructure (Crank & Jacoby, 2015; UN, 2015).

Although the inclusion of green spaces for urban dwellers and users has long been promoted as a vital element of the sustainable approach to city planning (Bertram & Rehdanz, 2015), there is an implication that these spaces are considered to be less important than other land uses by decision makers (Panagopolous et al., 2016). Indeed, the provision of quality urban green spaces (and sufficient accessibility) is constantly contested by other planning considerations perceived to be more beneficial (Panagopolous et al., 2016; Haaland & Konijnendijk van den Bosch, 2015). For example, the rapid speed of urban expansion across South America since the turn of the century has resulted in unplanned settlements which often undervalue green space provision in favour of more immediate land uses (Wright-Wendel et al., 2012). This concurs with Ridder et al.'s (2004) indication that it is difficult to immediately acknowledge the value of green spaces in the face of aggressive urban expansion, particularly when other land uses can provide a relatively swift return on service, infrastructure, or profit.

Yet urban green spaces are purported to provide benefits to their environmental setting, with good quality spaces positively affecting climate change, biodiversity, the economy, community ties, social relationships, and health (Johnston et al., 2013). If the impact of these

benefits could be increased, thus improving many aspects of urban living (Hitchings, 2013), then in turn, urban green space could become positioned as a more valuable asset for planners and decision makers, reducing the need for justification in the face of urban land use competition (Haaland & Konijnendijk van den Bosch). Hitchings (2013) suggests one way to do this is to get people to use urban green space more often, thus increasing the benefits gained by immediate exposure, and promoting the attachment of personal investment. However, Hitchings (2013) notes a problem: people might already be aware of the benefits and have access to good quality green space provision, yet many appear to be happy to go without experiencing green space. The question, therefore, becomes more about what might be stopping people from finding time to engage with green spaces, and how barriers, preoccupations, perceptions, and attitudes might be addressed in order to increase urban green space use.

Chapter 2 – Aims and Objectives

The aim of this project was to identify contemporary hindrances which inhibit the engagement between the urban populace and urban green space. Specifically, this research was concerned with exploiting the potential of urban green space in relation to the personal benefits derived in physical and mental health, and wellbeing, by recommending ways in which urban dwellers might be encouraged to connect with the space more frequently.

Aim:

The principle aim of the research project was to identify contemporary hindrances which inhibit regular engagement with urban green space, and to suggest measures for improvement.

Objectives:

1. Describe and assess green space in close proximity to the interviewee's daily routine.

2. Understand and analyse interviewee's habitual and routine practices, and their embedded perceptions of urban green spaces.

3. Develop practical recommendations for ways in which infrequent or non-users of green space can be encouraged to engage with the space.

A series of interviews (focus groups and follow up individual interviews) provided an insight into the routine practices of urban dwellers which preoccupy and thus prevent regular engagement with immediate green space. Discussions surrounded easily accessible, close proximity green space relevant to the interviewee's daily routine. Preparation for interview consisted of: site observation, to determine existing attributes and functionality; retrospective candidate diary review, to provide further lines of enquiry to the existing interview schedule.

Furthermore, the research was underpinned by a comprehensive review of complimentary literature and the current state of the art. A subsidiary review of associated policy and governance supported the relevance of the research. It was expected that the mixed use of secondary data revision and varied primary data generation would provide a holistic representation of the subject, resulting in a genuine and useful expedient output.

Chapter 3 - Literature Review

3.1 - Introduction

The following review of peer-reviewed literature aims to explore the notion that urban green space is beneficial to the urban dweller and the wider urban environment (Chiesura, 2004), and will investigate whether urban green space should have a higher priority in urban living environments. Furthermore, if green space is deemed to be beneficial to the urban dweller, the review will enquire if it is used as a matter of course, and look at ways in which users could be enticed to engage with it more frequently (thereby spreading the beneficial remit). The review will also consider the barriers which might prevent a more extensive relationship between urban green space and the potential user, and look at contemporary measures used to negotiate hinderances.

3.2 - The Role of Urban Green Space

Urban green space can be described as publicly accessible open space in the urban environment which has a perceptible degree of vegetative covering (Schipperijn et al., 2013). James et al. (2009, p.66) describe these spaces as, "predominantly unsealed, permeable, 'soft' surfaces such as soil, grass, shrubs, trees, and water", though Mell et al. (2013) include any paved or hard cover area subject to a programme of vegetative decoration. Demarcated urban green space areas include a range of: controlled municipal gardens and parks; public squares and street trees; nature reserves and woodland; residential lawns and gardens; green walls and roof gardens; agricultural plots (Schipperijn et al., 2013; Mell et al., 2013; Kabisch et al., 2015). Less immediate spaces may also qualify as green space: commercial waste ground or brownfield sites; verges beside railway lines, roads, and water courses; un-adopted back streets and unwanted plots of land (Wolch et al., 2014).

The environmental, economic, and social benefits derived from urban green space have been extensively recognised and researched, and are understood by city managers throughout both the developed and developing world (Dresner, 2006; Bertram & Rehdanz, 2015). Contemporary planning departments now consider the inclusion of good quality green space to be an essential component of the sustainable urban environment (James et al., 2009; Wolch et al., 2014). For example, in the UK, local development frameworks include green space provision and access as part of the core strategy (see Manchester City Council, 2012),

driven by a central government development plan (Public Health England, 2014). This attention to green space supports the recognition that it is a service provider simply by being there (Chiesura, 2004): sufficient provision can naturally facilitate a wide range of municipal obligations and problems while simultaneously providing an arena for other activities (Johnston et al., 2013). The following section explores the principal benefits derived from including green space in the urban environment.

Social Benefits

Studies indicate that adequate inclusion of good quality green space in the urban environment can directly affect social interaction by simply providing the opportunity for social contact (Qin et al., 2013; Panagopolous et al., 2016). Additionally, community cohesion and societal stability can be stimulated by the physical interaction of a population, and green spaces allow for easy integration under free and publicly accessible conditions, whether incidentally or through organised community events (Byrne and Wolch, 2013). Urban green spaces provide a positive setting for the development of children's creative, cognitive, physical, and social skills, with natural surroundings purported to be more stimulating than the built environment (Johnston et al., 2013; Mell et al., 2013). Furthermore, the versatility and relatively unrestricted opportunities presented by green spaces allow children to come into contact with nature, meet and socialise with other children and adults, and crucially for parents, "…explore...run around…just let off steam" (BOP Consulting, 2013, p.13).

However, there must be an emphasis on providing green space of sufficient quality in order for users to receive the potential benefits. Bertram and Rehdanz (2015) highlight the negative influence on residential satisfaction caused by unattractive or unattended green space. Krekel et al. (2016) discuss the perceptions of life satisfaction and self-evaluated health and wellbeing between residents with access to good quality green space, and those with access to poor quality green space. Their findings suggest that positive developments made to unattended or poorly maintained green spaces with low quality amenity value can reduce localised crime and antisocial behaviour, and greatly improve residential perceptions of civic responsibility. Furthermore, exposure to green space in disrepair, or bereft of a sense of community ownership, has a stronger adverse effect on residential satisfaction (Krekel et al., 2016). The implication here is that any positive effects on residential satisfaction depend upon the perceptible quality and amenity value of a space.

Arnberger and Eder (2012) imply that feelings of community attachment are higher if residential perceptions of green space availability and quality are positive. Lee and Maheswaran (2010) advise that the provision of an ample choice of facilities in a well maintained and perceptibly safe green space contributes towards the success of its use in the community. Their research suggests that more affluent urban areas are more likely to have better access to good quality green space and amenities, and are subsequently more inclined to use it. Lee and Maheswaran (2010) determine that low income residents are conversely

less likely to frequent available green space due to insufficient provision, poorly maintained features, and negative perceptions of fear and safety. Haaland and Konijnendijk van den Bosch (2015) support this, adding that planners should concentrate on amenity choice, landscape quality, and accessibility as a significant planning goal rather than the traditional objectives of availability and proximity.

However, Jones et al. (2009) conducted research which found entirely serviceable green space in relatively deprived urban areas, yet lower income residents were less inclined to engage than their more affluent neighbours. Further exploration suggested that negative connotations with crime and a displaced association of community ownership in lower income areas prohibited communal use, rendering local authority planning efforts concerning facilities and access redundant. This suggests that planning objectives concerning access and amenity might not be as significant as ensuring green spaces have an inviting and socially attractive quality if communities are to invest in them. Gehl (2015, cited in Walljasper, 2015) claims that "...cultures and climates differ all over the world, but people are the same. They will gather in public if you give them a good place to do it...", yet the highlighted research suggests that various negative socioeconomic factors may well determine whether communities decide to socially embrace green space, irrespective of its qualities (Jones et al., 2009; Lee & Maheswaran, 2010).

Physical Health, Mental Health and Wellbeing Benefits

The 2014 UK government's position on the physical health benefits derived from urban green space supports the proposition that universal access to good quality provision will promote outdoor physical exercise, improve inner-city air quality, and reduce the temperature of the built environment, thus reducing ill health caused by obesity, respiratory and cardiovascular diseases (Public Health England, 2014). This viewpoint is based on a body of "...significant and growing evidence..." which links access to green space with health benefits including, "...lower body mass index, overweight and obesity levels (Public Health England, 2014, p.3.). These studies commonly connect the potentiality of urban green space as an environment for physical activity with an assumption that people will use it if it is there (for example: Richardson & Parker, 2011; Mytton et al., 2012).

Yet there are calls for extended investigation into claims of causality between green space access and increased levels of physical activity. Hillsdon et al. (2006) found that residents with a better range of access to green space actually exhibited a lower use rate for physical activities than those with reduced access: this research recommends caution against accepting any public health value attributed to the impact of green space. Lee and Maheswaran (2010) also note a weakness in the evidence connecting green space access to an increased life expectancy and lower rates of stroke related mortality. Further studies by Richardson et al. (2013), and Schipperijn et al. (2013) explored potential causality, but could

not significantly associate physical activity, obesity, or general poor health with the size, amount, or proximity of green space to residents.

If the research into the direct effects of green space access on public health is formally inconclusive, there is still an argument for the potential of available suitable facilities in instigating and encouraging physical activity within local communities. Accessible green space naturally offers the opportunity for physical activity, and the likelihood of residential engagement can be improved if conducive features are included (Bertram & Rehdanz, 2015). Schipperijn et al. (2013) suggest that users could be encouraged by introducing well-maintained walking and cycle tracks, open and aesthetically attractive areas, and supportive infrastructure such as bicycle racks, benches, lighting, parking, and waste disposal facilities. Panagopolous et al. (2016) advise that the installation of known positive attributes and qualities into the landscape can bolster green spaces potential to promote general health through physical activity.

Further research into the functionality of green space might concentrate on one of the many variables. The research discussed above considers inaccuracies in the data relating to ethnicity, gender, income, employment, sexual orientation, and lifestyle choice, and this is without the complications of inaccuracies in personal physical activity data and an almost infinite number of differences in landscaping covariates. It is clearly difficult for academic research to assure directly improved physical health resulting from higher rates of access to urban green space.

The prevalence of green space in the built environment is a key visual indicator of the quality of life found within (Wright-Wendel et al., 2012). Having access to green space in our urban environments can improve mental health, perceptions of personal wellbeing, and our sensitivity to fear and safety (Lee & Maheswaran, 2010; Kabisch et al., 2015; Krekel, 2016). Exposure to urban green space can provide positive feelings and the fulfilment of some primal, immaterial, non-consumptive human need to connect with nature (Chiesura, 2004), while negative states of mind are more likely to dissipate in natural surroundings than in the built environment (Bertram & Rehdanz, 2015). This suggests that by just having green spaces in our environment, our perceptions of life quality are raised, and our wellbeing is augmented.

Results from Chiesura's (2004) work revealed that user's foremost motive for visiting urban green space was to relax, followed by a requirement to just 'be in nature'. Other motives given comprise of physical and social activities, alongside use of the space as a refuge away from the oppression of the city, allowing an opportunity for mental restoration, personal reflection, and a chance to order ones thoughts. Interaction with good quality green space helps to reduce stress and mental fatigue by providing the opportunity for rest and relaxation in a relatively serene location, and the chance to connect with wildlife in a natural setting (Grahn & Stigsdotter, 2010; Mitchell, 2013). This psychosomatic effect can lower blood pressure and positively affect various cognitive disorders, subsequently alleviating related

health complications and the increasing burden on municipal health services (Tzoulas et al., 2007).

Conversely, experience of poor quality green space, or connotations with adverse cultural or social sensorial qualities can create negative perceptions of self-reported health and wellbeing and diminish the potential for mental restoration (Grahn & Stigsdotter, 2010). Mitchell (2013) recommends further research into the different psychological responses to environmental experiences, while Krekel et al. (2016) advise that the quality of the landscape and its available facilities directly influence the user. If the positive and negative factors can be identified, they can be highlighted or mitigated as necessary (Grahn & Stigsdotter, 2010), indeed, actively greening an un-adopted or poorly maintained space can promote all the related benefits pertaining to green spaces, inevitably improving perceptions of self-reported health and wellbeing (Krekel et al., 2016). However, addressing naturally occurring aspects such as allergens, or animals and pests, is unsurprisingly problematic (Bertram & Rehdanz, 2015).

Environmental Benefits

Combatting the effects of climate change is widely considered to be the major political challenge of our time, and maximising the potential of green space to ameliorate the increasingly deleterious conditions in the urban environment by incorporating it into planning policy is a logical recourse (UN, 2014; IPCC, 2014). By ensuring sufficient provision of urban green space, city planners can moderate the impact of climate change related complications (Djordjevic et al., 2011). For example, carbon emissions are consistently linked with an increase in global warming (IPCC, 2014), and green infrastructure enables the capture and sequestration of carbon emissions (CABE, 2010). Green spaces can help to reduce warming of the city air by breaking up heat retaining surfaces, by providing canopy shade, and by releasing cooling moisture into the immediate atmosphere during trans-evaporation processes (Bowler et al., 2010). Furthermore, localised flooding during storm events due to hard surface run-off and subsequent drainage system overflow can be mitigated by employing green space as a water storage facility, allowing a controlled release of excess water (McManus et al., 2007). The retention of storm water naturally benefits air temperature regulation efforts indirectly, and allows the opportunity to reuse collected water to feed plants, to flush cisterns, or for use in domestic cleaning work (Drake & Kim, 2011).

Ridder et al. (2004) encourage the incorporation of green space into the urban landscape to reduce the impact of vehicle emissions by displacing traffic: flow can be broken up and possibly reduced by the systematic placement of green space. Furthermore, green infrastructure can assist with air pollution mitigation by absorbing and filtering emissions from traffic, industrial activity, power production, and aviation (Wolch et al., 2014). The appeal for fragmentation of the built environment is echoed by Haaland and Konijnendijk (2015), who specify the need for carefully placed green space as a practical antidote to

oppressive urban densification. The installation of appropriate urban green infrastructure can help to alleviate noise pollution, offer crucial habitat and food opportunities for wildlife, encourage biodiversity and ecosystem health, and (of increasing contemporary importance) provide a setting for the development of urban agriculture projects (James et al., 2009; Forest Research, 2010; Panagopolous et al., 2016; WHO, 2016).

Economic Benefits

Saraev (2012) infers that economic benefits derived from urban green space tend to be indirect. By providing a sufficient amount of good quality green infrastructure, place-makers can create a space with an inherent aesthetic attraction. This encourages public and private investment, increased footfall within the retail and tourism sectors, and consequent employment opportunities (James et al., 2009). Businesses who locate themselves in an area of well-maintained urban green space are more attractive to potential employees as well as customers (Johnson et al., 2013), while Coe et al. (2007) demonstrate that prospective urban residents are willing to pay a premium to reside in areas in close proximity to green space, resulting in increases in property and land values. Furthermore, poor availability and access to green space has been connected to higher crime rates, increased antisocial behaviour, and a reduced quality of life, creating a less appealing urban environment for potential homeowners (UN-Habitat, 2013; Francis et al., 2015).

As a facilitator of social, environmental and health related benefits and services, green spaces contribute towards the municipal cost of addressing the challenges in these areas (Johnston et al., 2013). Estimates suggest that spending on urban flooding in England and Wales has risen from £270 million in 2009 (Forest Research, 2010) to £1.3 billion in 2014, with the trend in ascendency (Ward, 2016). Pervasive installation of green space as a flood defence mechanism can help to alleviate damage, resulting in a reduction of repair costs (Mell et al., 2013).

Natural England (2009) claim that universal green space access for the urban population of England would improve the nation's physical activity by twenty five per cent, resulting in an estimated saving of over £2 billion per annum. Indeed, governmental studies attempting to value national annual health related expenditure in areas such as mental illness, physical inactivity, and heart disease are regularly commissioned to maintain an understanding of the position (for example, see BOP Consulting, 2013), though it is recognised that such approximations must be extremely difficult to quantify and guarantee. The process of marrying together governmental spending with insurance disbursements and loss of business estimates to arrive at a total cost is naturally afflicted with uncertainty, and any answer would most likely be out of date by completion. However, reports suggest that costs range into tens of billions of pounds per annum, and while in no way a total solution, the secondary positive impacts provided by urban green space can contribute towards relieving pressured financial obligations (Mell at al., 2013).

3.3 - Planning and Policy

In order to mitigate environmentally deleterious circumstances of sporadic, unorganised, and reactive urban development, the United Nations (UN) appointed the World Commission for Environment and Development (WCED) to construct an internationally agreed sustainable development charter (WCED, 1987). The resulting initial WCED report, 'Our Common Future', offers a comprehensive and clear definition of sustainable development as (1987, p.43): "[…] development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." Providing and organising adequate urban facilities whilst committing to a sustainable development path is one of the key political challenges of our time (Biddulph, 2012). Urban sustainable planning exemplifies Rittel and Webber's (1973) definition of a 'Wicked Problem', where the complexities of expansion are difficult to identify, unorganised, contradictory, and confusing. Additionally, planning solutions are highly resistant to conclusive resolution due to the conflicting interests of stakeholders, and the application of any decisive action spawning consequences in need of attention (Biddulph, 2012; Pryshlakivsky & Searcy, 2013). Norton (2005) explains that how we articulate a particular problem, for example, claims for protection or promotion of urban green space, can influence the solution options in the face of differing epistemologies from conflicting interested parties. If we value green space in monetary terms, it can be priced and traded. If we explain its value in terms of social capital, or in terms of environmental importance, perceptions of that land use may be framed in a different way.

UK based research indicates that while urban green spaces are valued highly by the public (with usage increasing annually), the allocated budgets to cover promotion, maintenance, and facility are decreasing to insufficiency (SNH, 2014; Heritage Lottery Fund, 2016). Furthermore, the physical conditions of these spaces are deteriorating, with the trend set to continue in line with contemporary authoritative austerity measures (Heritage Lottery Fund, 2016). There is evidence to suggest that affluent areas have experienced a marked improvement to their urban green space since the turn of the twenty first century due to the controlled direction of sufficient local budget allocation (CABE, 2010). Increased apportionment of a limited budget into green space management and provision is an easier decision if the budget is sizeable to begin with. The North West of England has suffered the greatest reductions in both staffing levels and budget allocation, and consequently expect to endure the highest proportion of declining urban green space until 2020 (Heritage Lottery Fund, 2016). There is a wide regional disparity in urban green space quality due to intensive localised austerity across the UK: deprived areas contain poorer provision than affluent areas, and ethnic minority communities generally experience low accessibility and the poorest quality (CABE, 2010). Research by Scottish National Heritage (2014) designed to produce advice for policy development relating to green space as a human resource, naturally recommends improvement to access, quality, and facilities, and the promotion of green space as a physical activity means. However, it is perhaps indicative of administrative attitudes towards green

space management that these recommendations do not explore the needs of different social groups.

Baur et al. (2013) explain the pressures on natural resource planners in Portland, Oregon (USA), indicating the tremendous challenge to remain an identified priority for decision makers and their annually reductive budget allocations. This paper promotes the use of attitude modelling to understand user and non-user attitudes towards urban parks: by retrieving questionnaire data, urban green space managers can react to public needs and desires in design and provision. This in turn improves the perceived public value of these spaces, and encourages protection via municipal investment. It is therefore crucial to the continued protection of urban green space that the services it provides are academically identified and researched, adding to an understanding of its value in non-monetary terms (Vandermeulen et al., 2011), and supporting the justification of consideration by planners in the face of spatial competition (Dempsey & Burton, 2012; Mell et al., 2013; Haaland & Konijnendijk van den Bosch, 2015; Panagopolous et al., 2016).

The fragility of the relationship between municipal planners and urban green space can be illustrated by Manchester City Council's recent pronouncements. Manchester City Council's Core Strategy for 2012 - 2027 (2011) highlights green space provision as a principle objective of its development plan. However, Mell at al. (2013) later comment on the side-lining of investment in green space by Manchester City Council, with the potential for increasing any benefit overshadowed by visible economic commitment to large scale infrastructure developments. Furthermore, the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework draft report (2016) outlines a design for developing new housing, employment, and supporting infrastructure in ten local authority boroughs in line with central government's National Planning Policy Framework. At the time of writing, the development plan is subject to an extended public consultation following widespread community discontent in light of a proposal to use ring-fenced greenbelt land for new housing stock (MEN, 2016). Although all ten council chiefs propose that brownfield land is to be remediated to exhaustion, the joint committee has conceded that if the target of 227,000 new homes in the area is to be met by 2035, protected green belt land which permeates (and indeed prevents) urban sprawl must be sacrificed (GMSF, 2016). This illustrates Landry's (2006) assertion that urban environments are truly dynamic and at the caprices of the powers that be, and also exemplifies a number of attributes which characterise Rittel and Webber's (1973) Wicked Problem. This contemporary planning issue exemplifies how easily policy can be reversed in times of need: parcels of land deemed to be worthy of protection by one administration are to be surrendered in order to service the political priorities of another. Again, if green spaces in the urban environment are to be protected, its value to us must be reinforced.

To summarise, UK governmental policy acknowledges the importance of green space exposure: the benefits are known, the requirements are understood. Furthermore, central government actively recommends that green spaces are protected, developed, and promoted within the urban environment (BOP, 2013). This may not be entirely altruistic given the

consequent economic benefits derived from civic use benefitting the wider municipality. However, increasing financial pressures mean that budgets are generally insufficient to maintain and promote urban green spaces, with land use protection threatened and surrendered if further urban expansion is deemed necessary. If green spaces are to be considered as important as other components of the sustainable city, they must be championed; they must be seen to be an integral urban feature, providing indispensable benefits and services, leaving us with an inherent appreciation which commands the continued maintenance of this land type's integrity.

3.4 - Public Use of Urban Green Space

Cheisura (2004) suggests that the positive impacts derived from urban green spaces, certainly in relation to public health, are significant enough to warrant a concerted effort to get the public to use them. The common approach to getting people into green space more frequently follows the assumption that if good green spaces are made available, then people will naturally patronise them (Hitchings (2010), echoing Jan Gehl's proclamation cited earlier). Grinde and Patil (2009) review a wide remit of research into urban green space attraction which focusses on an innate relationship we have with nature, driving us to connect with the environment on some primal level, and conclude that people certainly feel an inherent need to be in green spaces. Indeed, the argument for green space improvement and promotion, whether governmental or academic, generally assumes that this biophilic association will guarantee the success of development (Hitchings, 2013). It may be that the higher the quality of green space provided (CABE, 2010), and the more opportunities for recreation available (Neuvonen et al., 2007), the more likely it is to be utilised, however, green space availability alone does not necessarily assure that the public will invest in it (Schipperijn et al., 2010; Wright-Wendel et al., 2012).

In 'Urban Green Nation', a principal investigation into UK urban green space use, CABE summarises that, "…almost nine out of ten people [in the UK] use parks and [urban] green spaces, and they value them." (2010, p.2). Yet further research into attitudes towards green space use in the twenty first century suggests that more than half of the potential users do not visit it once a week or more, and one third do not participate in a physical activity in the outdoor environment (SNH, 2014). CABE's statement is particularly broad, sweeping the demographics of the user and the location of the green spaces into a generic, undifferentiated population sample. The assertion seems more confusing, and possibly redundant, with the report further suggesting that, "People from minority ethnic groups tend to have less local green space, and it is of a poorer quality." (CABE, 2010, p.2). There is an inequity in the initial claim, therefore, and the report does not attempt to identify green space visitations within differentiated categories of groups (of course, cultural differences can relate to ethnicity, employment, politics, fashion, and so on). The portrayal of a national average has little value

at a localised level, and less so if the discussion surrounds a minority group with an inherent reluctance or aversion to experiencing urban green space.

Urban green space use is influenced by its 'pull' factors: quality; capacity; cultural significance; availability of facilities and amenities; proximity; standard of maintenance; perceived personal safety (Giles-Corti et al., 2005; Schipperijn et al., 2010; Johnson et al., 2013). Wright-Wendel et al. (2012) further include: the presence of nature; a peaceful ambience; the opportunity for respite or escape from urbanity; opportunities to socialise, relax, and play. The choice of destination also depends upon the distance travelled to get to it, personal mobility factors (such as physical disability, old age, or infancy) and the size of the area: Wright-Wendel et al. (2012) highlight a propensity for users to gravitate towards larger green spaces, particularly those with a range of amenities. Yet Schipperijn et al. (2010) found that almost half of urban green space users do not use their nearest available green space the most, unless the reason for seeking green space is to walk a dog. With reference to urban parks in particular, the Leeds Parks Survey found that almost a third of respondents would not visit their nearest park, but opt to travel beyond their immediate locality to seek out 'better' amenity and facility (Barker et al., 2017).

City planners, then, can provide good quality localised green spaces, with appropriate accessibility and a broad range of amenity, but such provision cannot secure the success of a space in terms of footfall. Hitchings (2010) presents an interesting viewpoint: improvements to existing spaces can only ever benefit existing users. If we want to increase the value of these spaces, and we want the benefits to have a greater social and economic impact on urban life, then we need to get more people to use them. If green spaces are to ensure effectiveness in providing benefits to health, more attention must be given to their social penetrance (Grinde & Grindal Patil, 2009). This means exploring the factors which drive the disinclination to use urban green space arising from intrinsic cultural influences (Byrne & Wolch, 2009), and in terms of what Hitchings (2013) describes as those who simply do not position engagement with green space experience as a priority. Urban dwellers will almost certainly already be aware of the benefits of urban green space, but daily routines and practices prevent engagement by way of preoccupation (Hitchings, 2010). That is, we forget to use it, and other practices tend to command our attentions. Hitchings (2013) proposes that if the planning goal is to increase the benefits of green space for the urban population, then we might equally concentrate on the people who are less likely to frequent it and their reasons for not doing so, alongside consideration of sufficient provision and adequate functionality.

What Are the Barriers Which Affect the Use of Urban Green Space?

Wright-Wendel et al. (2012) highlight the attributes which dissuade us from using urban green space, including: the offer of small areas with few amenities; hazardous conditions; neglected or poorly maintained areas and facilities; oppressive walls and fences; poor vegetative cover;

insufficient lighting; presence of disagreeable occupants. However, Byrne and Wolch (2009) notice paradoxical descriptions of urban green space throughout their research, referred to as both havens of iniquity, and of restorative refuge. People frequent green space for many different reasons. Positive conventions include: tourism and leisure; sport or physical exercise; rest and relaxation; education; contact with nature; mental restoration or spiritual expression; family and social bonding; interaction with pets; sanctuary from the city; employment (Byrne & Wolch, 2009; SNH, 2014), yet contrasting, less positive motives for visiting urban green space are afforded by the opportunity for privacy, and range from mundane practices to the insalubrious, illegal, or dangerous (Knox & Pinch, 2006). Such societally adverse behaviours might include: gatherings of youth counter-cultures; excessive alcohol use; illegal substance use; homelessness; illicit sexual activity; robbery; violent or sexual harassment (Knox & Pinch, 2006; Barker et al., 2017). Characteristics which might put off one group of people might well attract another, possibly compounding the problem for those who elect to stay away because of them or the activities they indulge in.

Wright-Wendel et al. (2012) highlight a distinct change in green space attendance after dark, noting that spaces which might be considered attractive during the day hold negative connotations at night. Chatterton and Hollands (2003) further discuss the 'Urban Nightscape', where familiar areas frequented without apprehension during daylight hours become perceived as alien and hostile once darkness falls. Wright-Wendel et al.'s (2012) study found that respondents, particularly female, perceived urban green space at night as dangerous due to the potential for unsolicited interaction with intoxicated alcohol or drug users, gangs, or rough sleepers. Expected outcomes of such interaction related to the fear of personal attack or robbery, which determined the avoidance of these spaces during late hours.

Byrne and Wolch (2009) assert that different cultural groups use green space in different ways. Their study into ethno-racially differentiated park uses in the United States discusses distinctive sub-cultural persuasions (developed over generations) which help to explain the differences in attitude towards park use. For example: African-Americans are more likely to use urban parks in the absence of monitoring by law enforcement due to historic connotations relating to racial harassment; Latino park users have professed a preference for highly maintained spaces, free from the potential surprises of wild nature. Each ethnic group proclaimed oppressive feelings concerning marginalisation when encountering a space dominated by another group. This in turn limited their preferred choice of park, instigated longer journeys to find suitable areas, and consequently reduced the likelihood of engaging with green space at all. If green spaces cannot accommodate an array of cultural preferences, it is unlikely that different user groups will elect to use them (Wright-Wendel, 2012). This poses a problem for designers faced with limited space: the choice of situational feature is crucial to the success of the space, yet a wide variety of users must be catered for.

Lifestyle choices can have a strong influence on whether we elect to engage with green space, with the demands upon our available time under constant competition (Barker et al., 2017). The ubiquity of electronic entertainment through television, internet, and video games

challenges the idea that we might spend time outside (Adkins & Brown-Syed, 2003; Pergams & Zaradic, 2006; Worpole, 2000). Pursuits such as physical exercise can be tailored to suit an indoor arena. Hitchings and Latham (2016) discuss how some recreational runners have adopted the indoor treadmill as their arena for exercise, an unusual choice taken at face value in light of study participants descriptions of their perfect running conditions "…in parks, with the right number of people around or along the river as shafts of sunlight pierced the tree leaves above." (2016, p.509). Reasons for choosing to run indoors principally concerned the management of the exercise, in that timing and predictability could be guaranteed by using a treadmill. If one only has a lunchbreak in which to exercise, outdoor variables such as weather change, errors in route choice, or unsolicited engagement with the public, can be avoided and mitigated to protect the timescale: one participant remarked that although outdoor running might be more pleasant, an indoor run would actually be more relaxing.

Hitchings (2010) notes that downtown workers in London and San Francisco rarely travel seventy metres from their place of work during office hours, with many not leaving their buildings until work had finished for the day, even to take a break. This could be explained by workers wearing relatively formal clothing unsuitable for outdoor engagement (Hitchings, 2009), or by what Ward-Thompson (2002) describes as an unease with being seen to relax in a culture where one must be seen to be actively working. Additionally, some professionals may consider the idea of relaxing in green space during lunch as a barrier to remaining sharp and focussed throughout the afternoon (Hitchings, 2013).

Increasing the Use of Urban Green Space

The Scottish National Heritage (2014) report 'Attitudes to Green Space in Scotland' specifies the most common reasons given for not engaging with urban green space: we are too busy; poor health; prohibitive weather; no particular reason; old age; not interested at all; can't afford to. Of these seven generalised reasons, three (too busy, no particular reason, not interested at all) are related to personal attitudes rather than practical preventions or barriers: engaging with green space is not remotely on some people's radar, let alone in contention for something to do with one's time. The other reasons listed are more tangible, in that provisions can be made to reduce the restrictions of the barrier to some extent. Poor weather can be mitigated by wearing suitable clothing, though the attraction of green spaces in these conditions is subjective. Practical accessibility improvements can assist with mobility restrictions caused by old age or physical impairment. Free entrance can negate financial privation. The SNH survey is particularly revealing: although generalised, the most popular reasons for not frequenting green spaces do not directly concern crime, safety, sanitation, or what our peers might think. Therefore, if we can appreciate why some people might proclaim that they are too busy, or not interested enough, to access the personal benefits derived from engaging with green space, we might further understand how to encourage people who tend to stay away to engage with it more frequently.

The most recent World Health Organisation report concerning urban green spaces in Europe recalls previous institutional commitments (in particular: WHO Parma Agreement; UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; The New Urban Agenda) to provision and access for all within a realistic timeframe, ranging between 2020 to 2030 depending upon the source of the commitment (WHO, 2017). A follow up review of these pledges had revealed that although there was plenty of evidence for the positive impacts of urban green space on health, there was very little in the way of information on how these spaces should be approached in order to optimise the delivery of benefits (WHO, 2016b). A consequential project aimed at understanding how planners should maximise the design, implementation, and management of effective urban green spaces was commissioned, the focus firmly on the supposition that good quality green spaces with adequate facilities will instigate community engagement. Improvements to urban green spaces were termed 'interventions', described as "…changes that significantly modify green space availability and features through: creating new green space; changing or improving green space characteristics, use and functions; or removing/replacing green space." (WHO, 2017, p.7). The resulting report (Urban Green Space Interventions and Health, 2017) typically lists and explores appropriate good practices and initiatives, and suggests that interventions can indeed deliver positive outcomes, but of crucial importance would be a multidisciplinary, cross-community collaborative approach to planning. The participation of local communities, social groups, and intended users should be employed to ensure that a variety of functions and opportunities are available to attract all population groups. Furthermore, the report found promising evidence that intervention projects utilising an actively involved, local community based promotion and marketing programme, would return an increase in urban green space use, particularly in physical activity.

Advice regarding the opinions of non-users of urban green space is offered, yet limited to one sentence, "…it is also important to collect data from people who aren't using the green space and to understand what the related causes and potential barriers are." (WHO, 2017, p.20). No guidance is outlined: any further inference towards courting the opinions of potential users refers back to targeting and connecting with the local community. The report is otherwise comprehensive in its practical considerations for improving universal urban green space engagement, yet perhaps the slight attention paid to such a potentially important source of green space user is not unusual, even in such a significant report.

More recently, the Conservative led UK Government has released its twenty-five year plan for the environment (HM Government, 2018), presenting its forthcoming approach to dealing with land cover sustainability, resource efficiency, pollution and waste management, and health and wellbeing. The plan recognises a need to encourage more people to spend more time in natural spaces in order to benefit their health and wellbeing, and discusses a future commitment to creating and improving green infrastructure where it is absent or of poor quality, particularly in urban areas.

Of particular relevance to this research project is the acknowledgement that practically encouraging people into green space is a difficult enterprise. However, two areas marked for improvement are discussed further. The plan suggests that school's access to the natural environment via nature-friendly grounds, fieldtrips and outreach activities will be supported and made easier, the intention to progress academically orientated engagement. Additionally, the plan discusses environmental therapies under the organisation of the NHS, where mental and physical health can be improved by the use of therapeutic gardens and gardening, care farming, and outdoor exercise.

It should be recognised that schoolchildren and health patients under care are a relatively captive demographic set, and less likely to be encouraged into green space than they are taken. That is, improving their engagement with natural environments could simply be a matter of including it into their organised schedule, to which they may be obliged. Discussion surrounding how the remaining population might be enticed into green space to access the benefits is otherwise brief. By way of illustrating the complexity and difficulty of encouraging people who do not use green space (either regularly or at all), the plan can only offer the suggestion that this will be considered in the future: "We will scope out how we could connect people more systematically with green space […]." (HM Government, 2018, p.73). Any allusions as to how this might be achieved are vague, with the report concentrating on improvements to provision rather than improving footfall.

Hitchings (2013) identifies how general research into green space use might miss information relating to why people do not engage with it. Statistical methodologies using survey analysis cannot recognise the intricacies of individual routines or social group practices, and therefore cannot establish a holistic understanding of reasons for green space exclusion, and importantly, what aspects might eventually attract non-users. Hitchings (2013) comments that studies into the anthropocentric benefits of urban green space use tend to generalise the experiences and driving motives of a nonspecific user. That is, cultural differences are not wholly represented when arguing for the facilitation of green space provision (as discussed above), allowing a skewed persuasion indicating that derived benefits would profit everyone. Hitchings (2013) suggests that investigating whether different groups of people are inclined to use green space would provide a valuable insight into how provision might be organised.

Hitchings (2013) maintains that the physical organisation and aesthetic qualities of green space are the focus of study into attraction, without consideration of other cultural deterrents. There is an implication that the advancement of knowledge into green space improvement will only ever benefit existing users. Furthermore, studies concentrate on existing green space users without input from non-users, who may have different requirements or unidentified reasons for staying away (Hitchings, 2013). General sampling choices involve participants predisposed to engaging with green space in a positive manner, resulting in a narrow perception of cultural sensitivities.

Baur et al. (2013) further explore the gravitational pull of social networks, describing the strong impact of peer related influence on behaviour, attitude, and beliefs. Their suggestion is that societally learned manners are likely to compound a group attitude towards, for example, the decision to relax in a green space or not. This homophily, the notion that similar people will associate with each other, may explain why whole groupings of people exclude themselves from visiting urban green spaces (Baur et al., 2013). Compliance with the group behaviour can exponentially reinforce both the group's collective identity and the individual's attitude, making the reconfiguration of practices extremely challenging, and the limited scope for new information or new ideas permeating a close group mentality means that a natural change in practice is unlikely (Baur et al., 2013). Promotional exercises might involve working with community groups and their leaders to network the possibility of green space engagement, reaching potential users otherwise unavailable to conventional methods. Community groups working in partnership with urban parks or park user groups are already on the increase, introducing new users to green space by way of organised events or voluntary roles in park management activities (Heritage Lottery Fund, 2016).

Baur et al. (2013) advise promotional programmes to specifically target the influential factors of potential user's attitudes towards green space. For example, routine users generally value the restorative features and revitalising experience of urban green space highly (Grahn & Stigsdotter, 2003; Baur et al., 2013; Krekel et al., 2016), therefore advertising campaigns might emphasise the affective emotional qualities of green space. Equally, advertising directed at non-users might also benefit from highlighting the positive associations between mental restoration and urban green space: non-user attitudes towards visiting green space may be indifferent, but the presence of green space is generally agreed to be a good thing to have in the city (Baur et al., 2013). Promotions might harness the positive image that green space holds, and exploit the suggestion of potential personal benefits.

Shipperijn et al. (2010) indicate that comprehensive neighbourhood analysis is needed to understand why a specific green space might not be used. Such analysis would include knowledge of competing green spaces, and a thorough insight into the needs and wishes of local residents. Wright-Wendel et al. comment that the use of security measures (fencing, CCTV, the presence of guards) improved the perception of fear and safety in urban green space, with one participant declaring "…when there are guards, there is no fear." (2012, p.280). Additionally, the very presence of other people acts as an autonomous watchdog,

Largo-Wight et al. (2011) propose that urban green space might be incorporated into the work place in order to increase engagement with it. Measures could include integrating green space into building design and the surrounding area, using an abundance of potted plants, cultivating existing proximity landscapes to include various garden types, and providing green views from windows. Some measures are clearly more practical than others, particularly when considering existing buildings or the densified city in general, but the salient point remains. If we can't get out to green space, can we bring it in?

To summarise, reaching and including the non-users of urban green space is essential for growth in the sector: more users translates into higher advocacy and increased potential benefits (Baur et al., 2013). Indicating that the value of opportunities for health promotion are well established, Hitchings (2013) argues for a more holistic appreciation of the societal practices related to urban green space use in order to understand how people might be drawn to use it more frequently, and this may be crucial to increasing visitor numbers. Persuading non-users to engage with urban green spaces could be more effective if attention is paid to their daily customs and routines, and further consideration is given to how green space engagement might permeate established practices.

Chapter 4 - Methodology

4.1 – Introduction

This research project was interested in expanding the potential number of recipients receiving personal physical and mental health and wellbeing benefits derived from contact with urban green space, by recommending ways in which people can be encouraged to connect with green space more frequently in their everyday lives. Specifically, the aim of this project was

to identify and mitigate contemporary hindrances which inhibit engagement between the urban populace and urban green space. In order to gain an insight into the general routines and practices of daily urban life, the primary data required to explore the related themes and concepts would naturally need to be sourced from empirical evidence using participant experiences within the real world. This meant talking to people to discover what their daily preoccupations were, what their perceptions of urban green space are, and what requirements would need to be serviced to encourage them into the space on a routine basis. Influenced by the work of Shove, Pantzar, and Watson (2012), the project used a practice theory approach to exploring the complexities of the relationship between urban green space and the potential user in order to reveal and understand the barriers. With associated practices taken as the unit of analysis, the project's intention was to reveal the various materials, competences, and meanings which constitute urban green space use, to become appropriated for attention, intervention, and recommendation for change.

In order to achieve the project aim, a procedural organisation of scientific methods was used to accomplish each key objective. Primary data was generated by use of a mixed methodological approach, explained in detail throughout this chapter. Thematic and qualitative analysis was applied to the raw primary data, resulting in an original data set suitable for final analysis relating the findings to the review of the literature, thereby promoting further discussion.

Following the work of Hitchings (2010), Petersen (2013), Nettleton and Green (2014), and Cass and Falconbridge (2016), who successfully appropriated the use of practice theory to explore social phenomena while using qualitative techniques to carry out their studies, the methodological approach for this research principally involved the systematic interviewing of willing subjects to discover more about the barriers which prevent urban green space engagement. A series of interview exercises provided the research with the opportunity to explore the project topic thematically and conceptually, expectantly resulting in a naturally richer, more detailed data set than a blanket questionnaire exercise could provide.

In order to maximise the potential return of information received from undertaking interviews, a number of subsidiary, complimentary, and supportive methodologies were employed to develop the interview schedule. These formative exercises included: participant completion of a weekly diary to uncover personal routines, obligations, and practices, as well as accounting any urban green space engagements or opportunities; site observations to provide information on the accessibility, qualities and amenity of green space available to the participant's daily urban locale. Focus group and semi-structured interview sessions explored themes and ideas further, potentially revealing patterns, events, and driving forces. Analysis of each formative exercise provided the framework and direction for the focus group and semi-structured interview schedules. The following chapter provides a comprehensive explanation of the methodological approach used within this research. Figure 1 provides a schematic diagram of the project's fundamental methods.

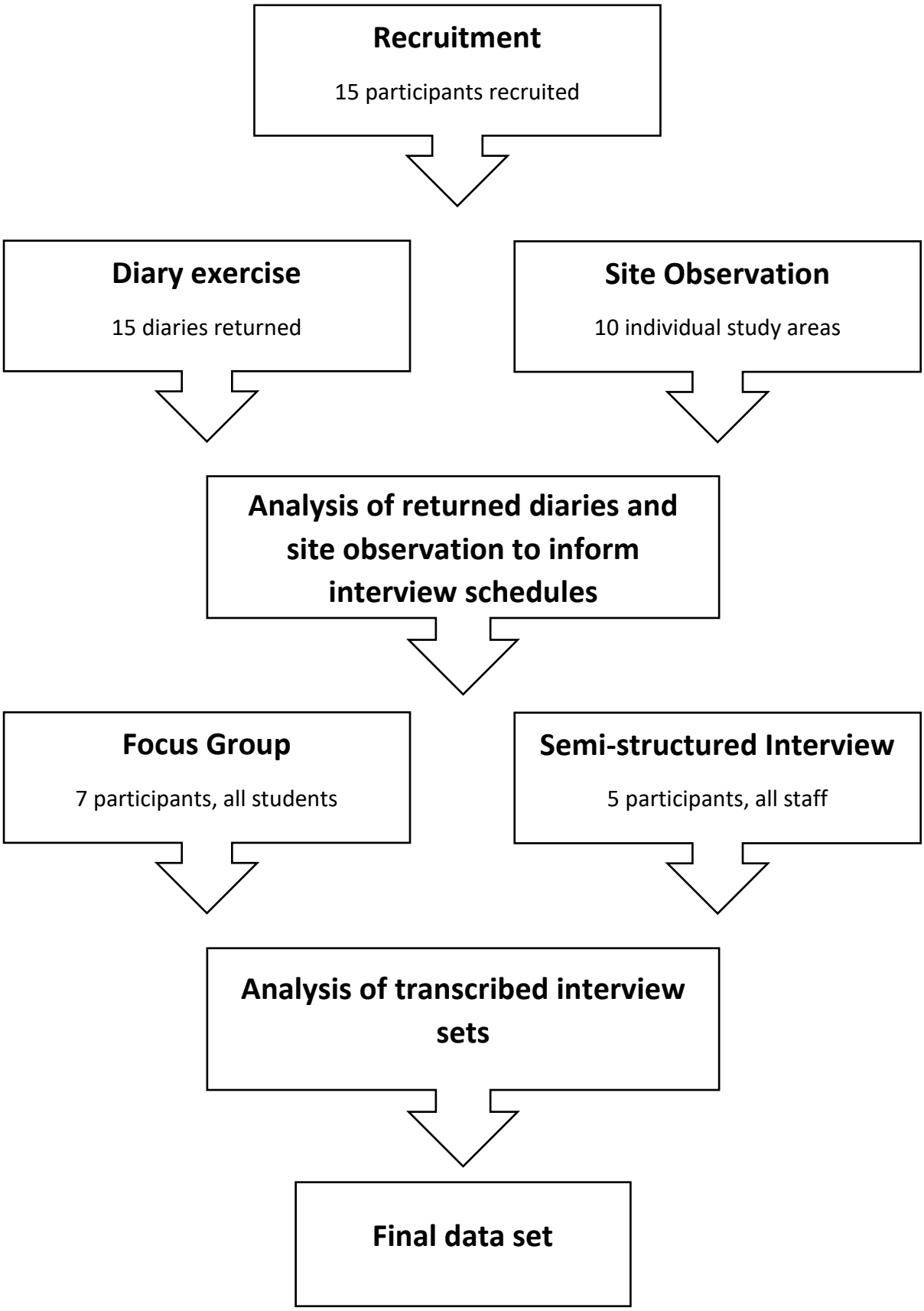

Fig 1 - Schematic representation of the project methodology.

4.2 - Recruitment

Please see Appendix (i) for recruitment campaign poster

Please see Appendix (ii) for project information sheet

Please see Appendix (iii) for participant consent form

Please see Appendix (ix) for demographic questionnaire

Overview

It is recognised that participants taking part in this study could only ever illustrate a generalised snapshot of the population: population demographics are so vastly diverse that it would be naïve to claim otherwise. The nature of this project's focus was interested in a multitudinous number of possibilities and potentials: the routines of our daily lives will differ incalculably, the probability for the unexpected to occur unknown. Providentially, this particular research project welcomed the idea of sweeping generality as its sample demographic.

It was therefore deemed appropriate that the sample used under this research project should be purposive in design, using convenience sampling recruitment methods. Silverman (2004) explains that sampling strategies in social science research often take advantage of participant accessibility as a practical and immediate way to access meaningful data. Kneale (2011) adds that this approach is entirely appropriate, sensible, and will most likely result in data that allows the in-depth understanding and genuine insight needed for qualitative research to claim relevance and significance. Braun and Clarke (2013) indicate that convenience sampling is particularly common in participant-based research, insisting that directing advertisement for participants towards an accessible source is pragmatic and resourceful. Furthermore, contacting a convenience sample increases the chances of a successful hit rate and allows repeat contact with the subjects should the need arise.

The most immediate and accessible set of participants available to this research project (by way of initial contact, potential for iterative communication, and proximity to a suitable research site familiar to the whole sample) was considered to be those based in the holding research institution of the University of Salford. By further expanding the participant catchment pool to include Manchester University and Manchester Metropolitan University, it was anticipated that willing participants from other sites would offer either contradictory or complimentary data worthy of discussion. Additionally, inclusion of other study sites into the research would offer the opportunity to compare different areas of green space, and allow consideration of contrasting or similar green space provision.

It is understood that making any conclusions about a broader population from such a unique and limited sample is academically and scientifically ineffective, rather Myers (2009) suggests

that social science research should indeed generalise to a theory rather than a population. Nevertheless, the intensity applied in social science research can offer a deep, rich investigation into a chosen topic, rather than a wider overview synonymous with a more inclusive investigation (Merriam, 2009). Yin (2018) adds that intensive case studies, or studies using small numbers of subjects, will most likely be the only way to access and uncover the important descriptive details crucial to ethnographic research. Qualitative studies are more concerned with theory building than theory testing (Yin, 2018), and as such, samples do not necessarily need to be representative of a whole population.

However, a non-representative sample presents something of a problem for the expediency of social science research; just how many participant interviews should be used? Baker et al. (2012) asked this question to early career researchers and established academics in an attempt to systematically validate an answer. Their study found that when asked '…how many?' most contributors replied without flippancy, '…it depends'. Braun and Clarke (2013, p.45) explain that sample sizes in qualitative research should be, "…large enough to capture a range of perspectives, but not so large that you are drowning in data." This suggests that there is no definite ruling on participant numbers in social science research. Nevertheless, there are experiential guidelines depending upon methodological and practical parameters relating to project timescales and resource availability.

Guest et al.'s landmark study (2006) proposes that guidelines for sample sizes in research are indeed non-existent, and explores the concept of saturation of information to determine sample size. Their supposition is that this would naturally be impractical prior to data collection, with saturation in this case referring to the point at which information begins to clearly repeat itself. However, Guest et al.'s (2006) research into saturation and variability during the commission of thematic analysis implies that saturation would most likely occur within the first twelve interviews, with the first six interviews expected to provide the basic elements of any predominant metathemes. Hagaman and Wutich (2017) review Guest et al.'s (2006) work by undertaking a similar study, arriving at the conclusion that sixteen or less interviews would be needed to satisfy variability whilst breaching saturation within a homogenous group. Threats to the validity and reliability of research can be mitigated by increasing credibility at all phases of the project (Barriball & While, 1994), and heeding Baker et al.'s (2012) advice regarding the constraints of research (for example, limited timeframe, finances, or experience), a sampling frame of twelve participants was decided upon for this project.

Candidates were canvassed from three local Universities (University of Salford, University of Manchester, and Manchester Metropolitan University). Invitation to take part in the research consisted of an email and poster campaign to attract and recruit participants (appendix (i)). Interested parties were provided with an information sheet detailing the project direction and an explanation of what would be involved (appendix (ii)), and a consent form to be signed and returned to the researcher (appendix (iii)). The interested parties were politely requested

to circulate the call for participants, thereby instigating a snowballing element to the recruitment process. Although snowballing is a non-probability approach (Cass & Falconbridge, 2016), it was hoped that enthusiastic participants might gather further interest..

Recruitment efforts purposefully avoided targeting specific demographic sets to ensure that the sample held the potential to consist of professionals, academics, and students. It was envisioned that using a purposive sample in this way would provide the desired diversity in a wide range of demographic factors, for example, differences in culture, age, interests, physical activity, and travel arrangements. It is recognised that the research participants were homogenised to the extent that they shared a common destination, and would likely share a miscellany of overarching influences, routines, and practices.

Although it was projected that twelve participants would be sufficient for a study of this scope, any additional interest was to be entertained: rather than being extraneous, excess data might mitigate shortfall in the event of any unexpected slippage or removal of participatory interest (Denzin, 1989; Barriball & While, 1994; Kneale, 2011). In any case, adherence to Guest et al.'s (2006) advice (that up to twelve subjects would provide diversity of opinion without oversaturation) would satisfy sampling sufficiency. The recruitment initiative successfully recruited fifteen participants, fourteen from the University of Salford, and one from Manchester Metropolitan University. The call for participants was unsuccessful at Manchester University, and further consideration of this site's potential was not entertained.

Upon receipt of the signed consent form, participants were issued with the diary exercise and a set of further instructions. Participants were also invited to a focus group session or an individual interview dependent upon their availability, and the practicality of organising sessions around work schedules. Participants were then asked to complete and return a demographic survey (appendix (ix)) to record differences in key demographic details. Table ### (overleaf) illustrates the key demographic details of the sample used throughout the research:

	Age	Gender	Ethnicity/ Background	Marital Status	Gender of Preferred Partner	Size of Family	Employment Status	Religion	Education
Armina	29	F	White European	Married	M	2	Student	None	PhD
Alan	52	M	White British	Married	F	4	Staff	Christian	Masters
Antje	-	F	White European	-	-	-	Student	-	-
Darren	-	M	White British	Single	M	1	Student - Self-employed	None	Undergraduate
Heidi	23	F	White British	Single	M	Small	Student – part time job	Christian	Undergraduate
Jen	36	F	White American	Civil partnership	M	2	Staff	Buddhist	PhD
Jackie	-	F	British Chinese	-	-	-	Student	-	-
Jeff	26	M	British Indian	Single	F	9	Student	Islam	Masters by research
Lorna	20	F	White British	Single	M	4	Student	Christian	Undergraduate
Nathan	-	M	White British	Married	F	-	Staff	-	PhD
Pete	40	M	White British	Married	F	3	Student	None	Masters by research
Rebecca	30	F	White British	Cohabiting	F	2	Staff	None	PhD
Reece	-	M	White British	-	-	-	Student	-	-
Thomas	29	M	White British	Single	F	1	Student	None	Masters
Tara	35	F	White British	Married	M	2	Staff	None	Masters
Comment	-	F = 8 M = 7	-	-	-	-	Student = 10 Staff = 5	-	-

Table 1 – Key demographic details of participant sample. No entry signifies no answer supplied.

4.3 - Participant Diary Work

Please see Appendix (iv) for participant diary model

Overview

To gain a formative insight into how people perceive and interact with urban green space, participants were asked to keep a structured diary for a week. The diary served as a brief illustration of how the participants related to urban green space, and allowed an understanding of their daily routines and obligations. The results determined the direction for further discussion.

Gibson (1995) suggests that participant diaries offer the researcher first-hand insight into situations and practices that would otherwise be unavailable. Furthermore, solicited participant diaries can provide researchers with the embodied and emotional complexities of daily life, selectively recording a longitudinal account rather than describing an immediate contemporary snapshot (Morrison, 2011). Participant diary keeping can be used as a performative recording of the structure of our practices and the relationship between them: as an intrinsically subjective narrative, they can offer an insight into working practices and reveal undervalued or overlooked components of everyday routine (Perry et al., 2015). Additionally, utilising participant diary recording can unobtrusively reveal intimate, sensitive, or otherwise untapped detail difficult to retrieve from face to face interviewing alone (Gibson, 1995).

Used in research, the solicited nature of participant diaries means that the informant is aware of the research aims, and fully conscious that their contribution is to be scrutinised (Latham, 2003). Any familiarity with the research objectives can affect participants decisions surrounding what information should be documented: the consideration of pertinent facts may be more nuanced than in an unsolicited, private diary, resulting in a possible bias yet simultaneously providing a strong return of appropriate material (Meth, 2003; Morrison, 2011). Furthermore, the unmediated accounting of participant routine allows for imaginative, diverse, and realistic attitudes towards the capture of information, potentially resulting in a record of candid detail alongside unexpected directions of enquiry (Latham, 2003).

It can be summarised that participant diaries can offer a wealth of rich data from a fully aware (and in this case entirely cognisant of the project aim) participant. The freedom given to the participant when recording their testament can allow a deeper, complex description of the topic, perhaps uncovering unexpected discussion themes.

An important consideration when organising diary keeping is the longevity of the exercise: how long should a diary be maintained? Grosh and Glewwe (2000) advise that participants can become tired of record keeping over a period of time, becoming less accurate and attentive in their reporting. The most commonly used time period in social science research

is one week (Wiseman et al., 2005), with acknowledgement of project scope restriction, saturation, and participant sample size governing the practicalities of scale (Baker & Edwards, 2010).

Participant Diary Methodology

A template was designed by the researcher and piloted by sympathetic, academically astute, confidants until any impracticalities were removed or adapted, leaving a working model complete with instructions for use (see appendix (iv)). The final template divided a daily diary into six loosely defined blocks of time under two command columns for entry, to be completed over a seven day period. The blocks of time were designed to be flexible enough to incorporate the diversity of individual daily schedules, and simply bundled parts of the working day into recognisable interpretations of described 'times'. For example, 'Lunchtime' might happen at different times for different people, yet it is likely something most will experience. 'Morning' is a defined period of time, yet our engagement with it may begin at different times. Additionally, and understanding that the voluntary goodwill of the participant should not be tested by imposition, twelve units of entry was discovered to be appropriately manageable by the diary keeper, while remaining practical and productive enough to return sufficient information to the research.

The first command column required the participant to consider their activities at different parts of the day. The instruction requested that each entry should describe the actions and events that took place, where these happened, and who with. This presented a snapshot of participants obligatory roles, behaviours, and routines, and provide an insight into 'other' activities, whether planned or impromptu. The second command column concerned an awareness of green space contact or interaction. Each participant was asked to record and describe any experience of green space, whether it was actively sought or not. Participants were encouraged to be expressive, and to include comments relating to: associated conditions and general qualities; evoked feelings; sensory observations; perceptions of fear, safety, antisocial behaviour, and cleanliness; any particular facilities on offer; abundance or lack of other green space users; wildlife; whether their clothing was suitable.

Participants were asked to expand the template if appropriate, and to return completed entries daily if possible, or at the end of their week if more convenient. The raw primary data derived from participant diaries were subjected to a thematic analysis using NVivo software, with particular interest in factors controlling the potential for initialising or extending engagement with green space. The findings would assist if not entirely govern the direction for the focus group and interview schedule.

Analytical Consideration

The purpose of using participant diaries in this project was to gain access to personal routines, working practices, and driving factors in relation to access to green space in the urban environment, in order to identify common themes and individual events that influence our decisions. The result of the analysis would eventually be used to build a framework for the forthcoming focus group and interview sessions. The applied analysis needed to:

- identify patterns in the data and discover relationships between similar ideas and concepts
- recognise key concepts of central importance
- discover critical incidents or important events that shape decision making

The diary exercise was intended to broadly reveal a relationship between urban green space and the casual, ordinary user. Individual diary transcripts were examined using the NVivo 11 Pro software analysis tool. The data was imported into the tool and subject to coding analysis to categorise pertinent themes. Four principle codes were created to begin classification of the data, however, it was anticipated that sub-categories would be discovered during the coding process. The four initiating codes were characterised accordingly:

- Specific reasons for using green space
- Unintended engagement with green space
- Missed opportunities to experience green space
- Specific reasons for not engaging with green space

Furthermore, interesting comments could be identified and highlighted under their own code. With relation to practice theory, the elements which make up practices were identified throughout each diary, and categorised as materials, meanings, and competences.

4.4 - Site Observation

Please see Appendix (v) for Urban Green Space Data Collection Instrument

Overview

The participants involved in this research were, along with other topics, studied in regard to their engagement with, and attitudes towards, the urban green space located near to their daily routines. It was therefore provident to have some background knowledge of this available environment, enabling the enquiry to have both genuine relevance and confidence in its conviction and direction. The urban green space in close proximity to the interviewee's workplace or study environment was observed and studied to contextualise the available qualities and facilities which might influence a decision on whether or not a site should be frequented, and of how it might be used.

By personally visiting and exploring urban green space close to the participants regular daily locale, it was anticipated that the raw data produced would be considered with impartiality while maintaining an acute specificity. O'Brien and Collins (2011) propose that first hand field observation can provide the opportunity for the researcher to experience phenomena without the prejudices, bias, inaccuracy, or agendas included within another's account. Furthermore, the direct immersion and experience allowed by observational fieldwork methods provides empirical data which documents the present reality (Johnson et al, 2000), offering a "…fairly accurate [rendition] of what the researcher can see, hear, feel, taste…" (Silverman, 2004, p.195). Pink (2009) supports this, adding that the perceptible aspect of retrieving one's own qualitative data, rather than relying on retrieving information from secondary accounts, grants access to intangible information which would otherwise be difficult to wholly understand. Crucially, the immediacy and practicality of accessing explicit data on site would be a terrific opportunity to get in amongst the environments occupied and frequented by the participants, providing a degree of empathy with the forthcoming interview responses which would help to direct proceedings.

By visiting and observing the study sites first hand, the research was able to focus on factors relevant to the enquiry, unfiltered by the control of information delivered by a secondary source. Clarke et al. (2009) discuss the extent to which site observation can recover non-verbal data, suggesting that any insight into concealed information (whether unwilling, unable, subconscious or unknown) can bolster efforts to provide a holistic understanding of an ethnographic study. Clarke et al. (2009) add that this hidden or obscured information may simply be considered discursive mundanity, dismissed as unremarkable, part of the ordinary routines which make up our everyday lives. For the purposes of this research, the discovery and recording of everyday routine practices (and the available spaces in which these practices could be performed) was central to understanding how urban green spaces are perceived and experienced, and any sanitisation, censorship, or regulation of this material could weaken the quality of the data.

On Urban Green Space Data Collection Instruments

In the UK, local authority practical assessments of green space will generally account tangible assets using a recognisable toolkit (CABE, 2006). Decision makers can then systematically (and therefore defensibly) determine whether sites have the sufficient features and facilities needed to encourage users into the space, and furthermore, problem areas can be identified for future remediation. Natural England's (2013) assessment report of prominent green infrastructure valuation tools infers that there are enough of these toolkits available that a specific selection to support or compromise a particular agenda is easy. A chosen toolkit may have omitted criteria deemed to be significant by a party in political or ethical opposition, for example, or it might not place appropriate significance on potential deleterious consequences. Subjectivity, then, can play a part in assessment tool selection at an

authoritative level. It was important for this research to be clear on exactly what it wanted to achieve, leaving the option of using an existing data collection instrument as an inefficient and imprecise discourse.

In order for the site investigation exercise to adhere with established scientific research principles, a way of systematically organising both the observation phase and the data recording phase was needed. A bespoke data collection instrument enabled the efficient, categorical, and importantly, repeatable collation of field data. This instrument needed to catalogue pertinent information in order to understand, for example, the extent of provision for physical activities, or incorporeal notions such as perceptions of safety, or attraction. This research project was less interested in assessing the quality of urban green space than it was in recognising factors which influence user engagement, however, the various green space assessment tools already available to the market served as a sensible and opportune starting point from which a list of phenomena was developed for the research to target. Saelens et al. (2009) suggest that a green space assessor in operation might look for:

- A presence of amenities and features, or **ELEMENTS**, for example: trails; paths; bathrooms; benches; bins; exercise apparatus.
- The quality of amenities and features, or **QUALITIES**, for example: condition; cleanliness; security; size; ambience.

For the purpose of this methodology, it can be summarised that elements within a green space are tangible materials, while the qualities of a green space and those elements within are intangible, and therefore open to subjectivity. The data collection instrument needed options to account for both, while identifying the omission of 'missing' features or functions.

Regarding ELEMENTS:

Saelens (2006) Environmental Assessment of Public Recreation Spaces (EAPRS) has been used in numerous academic studies (Peschardt et al., 2016) as a device to measure qualities and characteristics of physical environments such as parks and playgrounds, and as such, qualifies as a suitable tool for adaption. Saelens et al. (2006) suggest a list of elements and qualities which may be appropriate inclusions within a successful green space. Peschardt et al. (2016) further include features of green space which affect use relating to rest and restitution, and socialising, two key drivers of urban green space engagement. Slater et al.'s (2012; 2013) study concerns aspects of green space which enable users to act physically, and invites participants to discuss amenity provision and ambience. Their questionnaire includes participant's consideration of a list of sports facilities alongside other amenities, such as: drinking fountains; restrooms; shelter and shade; picnic opportunities; parking; bicycle racks.

Regarding QUALITIES:

The UK does not have a statutory national quality standard for parks and urban green spaces. Various Government publications concerning quality refer to the voluntary Green Flag Award system, owned by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). The Green Flag scheme appears regularly in government authorised publications concerning green space assessment (Natural England, 2013; Greenspace Scotland, 2008), and offers some reputability alongside its inclusion into, or adaptation for, a bespoke field data collection instrument. The Green Flag Award recognises the qualities of individual sites, but general service delivery is not accounted. Areas of key measurable criteria which determine the overall status (and presumably, potential operational success in the view of the DCLG) of urban parks and green spaces are summarised below (Green Flag, 2016):

- A Welcoming Place
- Healthy, Safe, and Secure
- Clean and Well Maintained
- Sustainability
- Conservation and Heritage
- Community Involvement
- Marketing
- Management

Green Flag's assessment toolkit further expands the umbrella criterion listed above, adding appropriate depth to each area, and asking questions relating to each theme (Green Flag, 2016). For example, the opening section 'A Welcoming Place' demands further comment on whether: the approach feels welcoming; access is deemed good and safe; signage is appropriate and useful; access feels equal to all. An ordinal marking system is then used to score each criteria, and ultimately tallied to produce an average total score for each assessment. This presents a question of validity and relevance in light of the extreme variety of urban green space, moreover if the natural subjectivity of each individual assessor is considered. Indeed, Greenspace Scotland (2008) insist that standards for assessment are locally determined, remarking that because of the wide ranging variables in play a national standard baseline quality of urban green space is impossible to set. However, the score can be principally used to aid each assessor rather than position the site under assessment in a league table of quality. The scoresheet is coupled with a feedback sheet which allows a more detailed description of commendation, criticism, and recommendation, and is returned to the applicant on completion of the survey.

Site Investigation Methodology

A choice selection of appropriate aspects of the established green space assessment and evaluation tools mentioned above resulted in a consolidated draft field data collection instrument. Consisting of a catalogue of features one might expect to find in an urban green space environment, and an appraisal sheet covering the key criteria associated with influential urban green space qualities, this union of notable elements and qualities served as a field work prompt, guiding the researchers efforts when observing, understanding, and describing the various study sites. Unlike many of the prominent available assessment toolkits, the data collection instrument needed for this research would not need to be overtly interested in determining an intrinsic value of a space, rather the recognition of available assets and their significance would be more useful in the forthcoming interview sessions.

Alongside the documentation of physical elements and identifiable characteristics would be the recognition of more ethereal properties. Care was taken to acknowledge sensorial phenomena, and of how the spaces were perceived in relation to, for example, notions of safety, fear, conviviality, and exclusion. Photographs were taken to support comments and assist with contextualisation.

The draft data collection instrument was piloted by approximately twenty level five undergraduate students concurrently studying urban geography and environmental management modules. The draft tool was taken on an international field trip taking in four Scandinavian cities, and used during several green space assessment exercises. The feedback obtained from the pilot exercise proved to be beneficial for several reasons, and was influential in tuning the final data collection instrument. For example, the ordinal marking system appropriated from the Green Flag assessment toolkit was deemed to be confusing and ultimately misleading: participants found themselves uncertain on whether scores for entries such as personal security, dog fouling, and pesticide use should be high or low. The vast differences in variety of urban green space use and design left any numerical 'score' difficult to understand and therefore any comparative positioning meant relatively little. This was rectified by removing the scoring system entirely, leaving the finished tool to concentrate on the acknowledgement of a factors presence or absence, and a more useful personal related description. To assist with describing the factor or feature in question, a categorical rating column was added to acknowledge any relevant standing in quality, ranking from 'Very Poor' to 'Exceptional'. This allowed a snapshot recording of how the researcher felt about a particular entry, streamline any later review of the raw field data, which would help when discussing site provision during interview.

Other recommendations for improvement included modifying the available comment fields to simplify the mechanical practicality of inputting data, and removing entries for factors which needed explicit prior knowledge before comment was possible, for example, whether the management plan of a space had been implemented well, or whether funding had been

apportioned sufficiently. A section was added to assist the researcher with the recording of how people were acting in and using the space.

The final version of the field data collection instrument (appendix v) allowed an efficient cataloguing of urban green space elements and qualities, organised in an accessible format suitable for further analytical consideration.

Analytical Consideration

The data collected in the field was subjected to a manual coding exercise in order to identify recurrent patterns and themes, categorical range information, and most importantly, significant and interesting phenomena. The site observation exercises were designed to uncover interesting details about the urban green spaces immediately available to the participants daily routines, so that the following interviews could be instructed from a position of familiarity. Ethnographic observation can be useful in the preliminary stages of research (Silverman, 2004), particularly when trying to recognise the functionality of a space, or when trying to understand how a space might be experienced (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). The data retrieved from this method was 'picked over', with the clearly pertinent or stimulating information drawn out and used to contextualise the schedules for the forthcoming interviews.

4.5 - Focus Group Interview

Please see Appendix (vi) for focus group interview schedule

Overview

Focus groups interviews are moderated group discussions, where a small sample of contributors are prompted to confer and respond to an organised topic with the purpose of eliciting opinions, conceptual ideas, and experiential experiences to generate qualitative research data (Tynan & Drayton, 1988; Breen, 2006). Kruger and Casey (2009) propose that focus groups can be used effectively in the formative stages of research studies by heuristically testing and screening project direction, thematic and academic value, and the participants themselves. Furthermore, the methodology can be used to explore and expand under-researched areas, adding speed and adaptability to the research process (Silverman, 2004). Breen (2006) indicates that the fundamental difference between focus groups and direct individual interviews is that the former is more appropriate if the researcher requires to generate new ideas within a social framework. One-to-one interviews are ideally suited if one wishes to investigate individual experiences or values without distortion from the presence of social pressures, yet less suitable for vibrant thematic exploration.

Focus group sizes should be small enough to manage, making sure that all participants have equal opportunity to contribute, yet large enough to ensure diversity of opinion (Breen, 2006). Common sample sizes lie between four and twelve participants (Kitchen & Tate, 2000; Kruger & Casey, 2009). Kruger and Casey (2009) discuss the fragmentation of groups exceeding twelve participants in number, where interest can be stifled under rare opportunities to speak out or interject: at that point, conversation can disintegrate into concentrated pockets of independent group discussion (Tynan & Drayton, 1988). Although a focus group can technically operate at a sample size of four participants, the productivity of such an exercise is restricted by a smaller pool of total ideas (Kitchen & Tate, 2000).

Focus groups are naturally situational and unique, and as such 'success' depends upon: the expertise of the researcher; the subject matter; the environmental setting; the enthusiasm or attitudes of the participants (Kruger & Casey, 2009). The self-conscious participant is prone to pseudo-intellectualisation in the presence of peers leading to the possibility of erroneous or fabricated replies designed to embellish actuality (Zaltman, 2003). This may be due to embarrassment by, inexperience of, or negative reflection surrounding the topic. Furthermore, strong individuals can potentially influence a session, and therefore the results, by persuading or dominating others (Kruger & Casey, 2009). Breen (2006) recommends that the skilled moderator should be aware of the group dynamic at all times, and must exercise a control of the dialogue should the topic wander. Kitchen and Tate (2000) advise that the recruitment should pool from participants of similar backgrounds to avoid disruptive confrontation. For example, it would be difficult to initiate free flowing conversation and blue-sky thinking from a mixed party on opposite sides of an argument: victims and abusers, oppressed and oppressors, or lawful and unlawful participants are unlikely to divulge genuine opinions in each other's company.

Focus Group Methodology

The purpose of using focus group sessions in this study was to progressively explore the metathemes discovered in the diary exercise and expand upon any unique participant perspectives. A coding analysis of the diary returns provided a number of pertinent thematic streams and distinctive, unexpected lines of enquiry, alongside important events and patterns in the data, adding to the refinement of the final focus group interview schedule (see appendix (vi)).

Recruited participants were invited to attend a two hour, closed room, focus group session at a mutually convenient time. Two hours allowed comfortable delivery of: a 'welcome' refreshment, introductions and ground rules; a one hour focus group exercise; a 'wind down' period and opportunity for participants to reflect and ask questions. The sessions were limited to group sizes of six to eight participants for ease of dialogue management and practicality, and to ensure that the sessions ran as efficiently as possible. A total number of fifteen available questions were available to explore over the one hour period, designed with an

ambiguity in order to maintain a natural flow should conversation change direction. Several questions were designed simply to stimulate interaction in case of a lull. The sessions were audio recorded, and transcripted by the researcher after the event into text suitable for analysis using NVivo software. Researcher driven transcription was chosen to allow an extended familiarity with the data, which was considered essential if the efficiency of the coding analysis was to be maximised.

Analytical Consideration

NVivo software was used to identify and organise the pertinent themes and specific matters of interest. Coding categories initially followed a similar pattern to the diary analysis design as a starting point, and incorporated any new directions of discussion as the investigation proceeded. Subcategories were added and populated as the recursive analysis unfolded. Primary coding categories consisted of:

- Specific reasons for using green space
- Unintended engagement with green space
- Missed opportunities to experience green space
- Specific reasons for not engaging with green space
- Comments relating to changing practice
- Comments relating to improving amenity

Additional categories were included to collect any interesting comments, and again to identify the elements of practice, for later discussion.

4.6 - Semi-structured Interviews

Please see Appendix (vii) for interview guide notes

Overview

There are several interview methods closely associated with ethnographic research, ranging from formalised questionnaire surveys concerned with quantifying discrete responses, to free flowing interview approaches designed to be adaptable and inclusive of new or unexpected information (Johnson et al., 2000). Flowerdew and Tate (1997) discuss the limited format and rigidity of the standardised questionnaire, useful if the desired result is a set of representative statistical data from which generalisations can be construed, less so if we are concerned with the specific interests, experiences, and views of the individual participant. Stimulated emotive responses cannot be recorded under such prepared conditions (Laurier, 2003), nor does the participant have the option to explain themselves in their own words (Payne & Whittaker, 2000). Furthermore, indirect, closed questionnaire surveying cannot gain access to the wealth of non-verbal communication delivered during participant responses to the personal

interview: researchers may well interpret spoken replies differently from the intended sentiment in the presence of an emotive emphasis, such as indifference, passion, fear, insincerity, or anger (Laurier, 2003; Silverman, 2004; Pink, 2011).

Contrarily, direct semi-structured interviews with willing subjects can provide a conversational, fluid dialogue, capable of adaptability should an interesting line of inquiry arise and controllable under the direction of a sensitive researcher (Payne & Whittaker, 2000; Silverman, 2004). A skilled researcher in attendance can solicit not only comprehension and the completion of conversation topics, but coerce a more profound level of understanding into discussion themes by employing pertinent and reactive questioning in response to new information (Flowerdew & Martin, 1997; Silverman, 2006). The very presence of a researcher promotes the likelihood of an interviewee divulging holistic, unassisted responses to questioning (Barriball & While, 1994). Furthermore, superfluous discourses can be managed by refocussing the conversation back to the planned subject matter using subtle, unobtrusive dialogue guidance (Kitchen & Tate, 2000).

Under semi-structured interview conditions, the researcher has the opportunity to revisit covered ground in order to explore a conversation stream more thoroughly (Flowerdew & Martin, 1997). This can prompt the interviewee to explain contradictories, complexities, and justifications within their contribution, and uncover possibly important aspects of their daily lives which might otherwise be considered too mundane to remark upon (Bryman, 1988). Reiteration of topic allows respondents to reveal material or issues that might not have been anticipated in preparation for interview, potentially generating a stimulating, thorough, and multi-layered exploration of contextual themes difficult to expand using a statistically grounded research method (Johnston et al., 2000). Kitchen and Tate (2000) summarise that questionnaires are limited to numbers and facts, whereas interviews concern beliefs and meanings.

Semi-structures interviews, then, can allow the researcher to control the direction of conversation by guiding the interviewee along the topic, or by adapting the course of enquiry to follow an interesting stream. Additionally, the ability to return to or press a particular theme or comment can go some way to ensuring the satisfactory completion of a line of investigation. The research data needed by this project needed to have genuine depth to ensure integrity, with personal accounts crucial to the value of the work: efficiency during data collection could certainly be enhanced by using flexible, sensitive coercion to extract new and exciting information directly from participants.

Semi-structured Interview Methodology

The semi-structured characteristic of the interview method used by this project was employed to allow the presentation of reasonably defined topics for consideration to be combined with the ability to reorder supporting questions and follow up discussion in reaction

to the flow of conversation. A light structure to interview proceedings ensured that certain areas of research were covered, while new information could still be addressed as it emerged. An order of discussion topics did not need to be adhered to, and space for the interviewee to explore an area of interest to them not necessarily covered by the research design was allowed, indeed, considered to be crucial to discovering important raw data.

With this in mind, the rigidity of an interview schedule seemed impractical. Instead, a general topic guide was designed (appendix (vii)) to ensure the presence of certain meta themes within the discussion, while allowing room for the management of underlying topical conversation. Broader questions and ideas were presented to the participant to initiate a dialogue, with prompts cherrypicked from the guide to encourage direction wherever necessary. Each interviewee was unique, and their distinctiveness was of benefit to a final data set which sought after a varied response. The flexibility offered by using a semi-structured interview style exploited the individuality of each participant, and safeguarded each session from returning similar entries.

Participants were invited to interview either if they were unavailable to participate in a focus group session, or if their contribution during a focus group session was considered to be worthy of expansion. The interview sessions lasted approximately thirty minutes, but were able to be extended if appropriate and if the participant was happy to continue. The interviews were digitally recorded and later transcribed for analytical consideration using NVivo software. As such, the venue for the interview session needed to be acoustically appropriate for the limitations of the recording equipment, guaranteeing some clarity in the successful copy. An indoor venue was considered to be fitting, with the irony of conducting a conversational interview which intended to cover the barriers preventing us from taking work into an outdoor space not lost on this researcher.

The choice of venue was ultimately be down to the participant, with suggestion from the researcher that a quiet café would be suitable: the topic was not particularly sensitive should anyone overhear; the relatively relaxed nature of the interview style could be augmented by the relaxed ambience of a coffee shop, promoting a comfortable exchange; the interviewee might be more comfortable with meeting an unknown researcher in a public space. However, should the participant be restricted by work or study commitments, the session could travel to suit.

Transcriptions were carried out immediately to make use of fresh memories from the research process, recollecting any ‘unspoken’ information, such as head shaking, smiling, frowning, shoulder shrugging, and of any relevant emotive nuances in speech delivery which would be difficult to detect in print alone.

Analytical Consideration

A thematic coding exercise using the NVivo software utilised in earlier research methods during this research was used to support an examination of the data to find groupings and remarkable points of interest. The framework for this organisation was similar to the previous coding exercises, and again, added to once any interesting information was uncovered. Furthermore, it was anticipated that the coding section relating to separated elements of practices would be embellished and enhanced after speaking directly with the participants. Analytical comparability between each interview was not really appropriate, rather a review of the whole data set concentrated on highlights and common themes.

Denzin (1989) suggests that the subtle delivery of each interview question, and also effectively understanding and reacting to replies, is vital to running a successful session. Differences between interviewer and participants vocabulary (Denzin, 1989), their willingness to engage (Barriball & While, 1994), inherent bias (Pink, 2009), and the presence of the researcher can have an influence on participants responses (Anderson, 2010). Kneale (2011) questions the extent to which a burgeoning researcher can genuinely return on a completed study due to an unavoidable and expected inexperience. It was therefore understood that the reliability of the interview data is governed by the researchers interaction with the interviewee, and it was acknowledged that this researchers skills were still developing. However, the potential to miss an opportunity should diminish with each interview exercise as research experience builds (Payne & Whittaker, 2000), and this encouragement, coupled with the participant's willingness to contribute towards follow-up interview sessions if needed, was deemed to be enough to guarantee a sufficient capture of raw data. Additionally, at this point in the project timescale, the other research methodologies used had been subjected to coding exercises. A further review of the findings so far, along with ongoing, recursive analysis in each research methodology to assess the coding and check for any oversight, was deployed to benefit the validity of the final data set.

4.7 – Theoretical Approach: Practice Theory

Introduction

The key explorative direction of this project enquired after how we might develop or change our routine behaviours in order to allow and encourage more engagement with urban green space. By making reasonable adjustments to established practices we might meet the needs of the urban green space user in such a way that the chances for interaction are improved. In order to explore the possibilities of change in established routine behaviours, the intricacies and connections of our practices needed to be identified and explored. Theories of social

practice can offer a lens through which these details can be recognised and organised in order for the eventual analysis to have validity.

What is a practice?

Practices, according to Wilde (2005, p.134), are "…coordinated entities that require performance for their existence." This simplistic yet accurate description neatly summarises exactly what we need to know, however, unpacking the notion of practice can help to understand the hidden intricacies which might be influenced if we are to recommend change.

Practices can be described as entities: recognisable, interrelated component parts of a practice, the sum of which produce an identifiable and stable 'doing' of something. Reckwitz (2002, p.249) describes practice as "a routinized type of behaviour" where a pattern of interdependent actions are enacted within a distinctive 'block'. These actions exist as elements which form a recognisable entity when combined, and could consist of bodily activities, mental activities, tangible materials or equipment, and background knowledge of the practice. Practices simultaneously exist as performances, as the carrying out of a practice over a distinguished timeframe by people (Shove et al., 2012), simultaneously executing the practice and reproducing it to ensure its existence (Maller, 2015).

Practical examples of a practice might include cooking, driving a car, travelling by train, or getting married (Blue et al., 2016). Shove et al. (2012) illustrate the notion of practice existing as concurrent elements and performances by using the act of skateboarding. Individual elements of skateboarding as a practice might include: the skateboard; appropriate space; the specific rules and customs of skateboarding; physical and mental competencies relating to the practitioner's ability to accomplish movement and tricks; the associated attitude of the culture and its meanings to both the practitioner and the onlooker. When combined, these elements can be recognised collectively as an entity, a package which can be identified, discussed, and referred back to as a resource should one be interested in what the practice of skateboarding entails. However, skateboarding must be performed if it is to exist, and it is this reproduction of its interdependent elements which allow the practice to endure.

Schatzki (1996, p.89) summarises that a practice is, "a temporally and spatially dispersed nexus of doings and sayings", however, Warde (2005, p.141) stresses that practices are not "hermetically sealed" entities, but can diffuse into each other, borrowing and copying when affected by their political, infrastructural, and technological environments. This suggests that practices are actions or activities carried out over the same period of time and in the same place, and they are influenced by social and environmental stimulus to produce a dynamic pattern of behaviours. Therefore, recursive performances of a practice follow an established pattern of what to do, an understanding of how it's done, and the objective reasons for doing it. However, elements are liable to change if subjected to external influences, either in response to immediate impacts or by evolving over a period of time.

What are social practice theories?

Social practice theories are a response towards understanding social actions. There is no one unified, comprehensive, go to 'practice theory', rather 'practice approach' exists as a continuing body of complimentary work by social, cultural, and science and technology theorists (Brauchler & Postill, 2010). The foundations of what we describe as practice theories were established by some of the leading sociological thinkers of the twentieth century (Bourdieu's concept of 'habitus', Foucault's concept of discipline, Gidden's work on structure) and has been developed further by contemporary academics into a rich set of principles and assumptions from several theoretical backgrounds which can be drawn upon to assist the exploration and explanation of social phenomena (Nicolini, 2012). Theories of practice are interested in how things get done normally, and the way in which the reciprocal relationship between human and non-human actors is interconnected (Shove et al., 2012). As such, practice theories present the opportunity to investigate the different influences which form, and are enacted within, routine practices (Petersen, 2013).

Although different contemporary practice theories emphasise different aspects of practice, they generally have commonalities in how they identify influences in behaviour (Gram-Hanssen, 2009). Social practice theory enquiries will frame the unit of analysis so that the focus is on the actions involved in that practice (and the available intricacies which allow rational decision making): the social practice itself is the object of the study, rather than the behaviours of the individual, their choices, or the individual themselves (Shove et al., 2012; Maller, 2015; Blue et al., 2016). Using a practice theory lens allows the identification and study of both micro and macro factors (Blue et al., 2016), and offers the opportunity to reveal and observe potentially overlooked processes in a routine, particularly that which might be perceived as ambivalent or mundane (Hitchings, 2011).

Maller (2015, p.57-58) summarises Reckwitz (2002) by explaining the units which make up a practice as, "…interconnected elements of bodily and mental activities, objects or materials and shared competences, knowledge and skills." Shove et al. (2012) propose that these elements can be categorised as separate elements, specifically materials, competences, and meanings. By separating and classifying individual elements, practices can be schematically deconstructed, allowing an inspection of its fundamental parts. Shove's compartmentalisation can be summarised thus:

- **Materials**. The actual 'things' we use when we are doing whatever it is that we're doing, that is, objects, technologies, tools, infrastructures, or any tangible entities.
- **Competences**. The 'things' we know so that we can do whatever it is that we're doing, including embodied skills, knowledge and know-how, and technique.
- **Meanings**. The significance of the practice in terms of how it relates to society, whether symbolic, ideological, or aspirational. Maller (2015) adds that meanings are about how and why things are done, guided by cultural expectations and conventions.

Elements of practice are abstract until they are actively combined during the performance of a particular practice; the practice becoming the sum of the interdependent relations between its essential parts. Maller (2015) uses Shove et al.'s (2012) categorisation of elements to illustrate the social practice of eating breakfast (figure 2 overleaf). Taken as individual components, each element of would appear arbitrary: it is only with the integration and performance of the three elements that the practice becomes manifest.

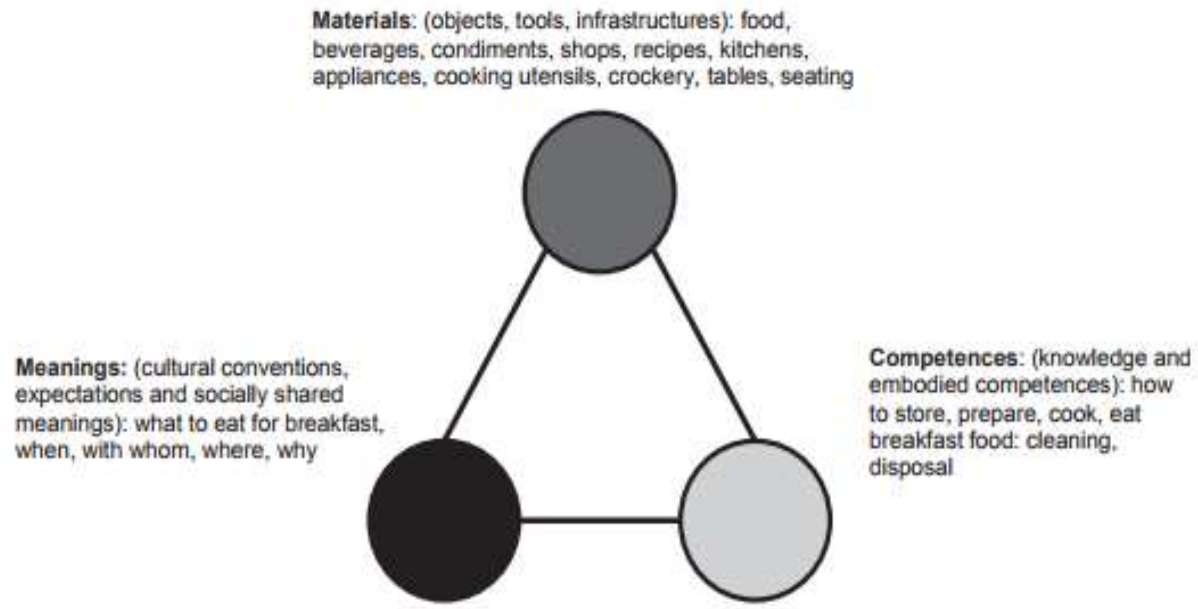

Fig 2 - The elements of the social practice of eating breakfast (Maller, 2015).

Maller's (2015) example shows different types of components linked by bonds, which integrate the elements, and consequently form the recognisable practice of eating breakfast. Shove et al. (2012) explain that elements exist outside of a working practice, either without being linked yet (as a proto-practice), or as the remnants of a disintegrated practice where the links are no longer sustained. This suggests that the linkages between elements are centrally important to the idea that practices can change: the links must be maintained to sustain a practice, and if they are altered or conclude, the practice will in some way alter, or even cease to exist.

How might practice theory assist with changing our interactions with urban green space?

To summarise the above, practices can be analysed and explained by deconstructing the practice in question and exploring its fundamental elements. Practice theories attempt to understand the connections between routine practices and the social structures and physical infrastructures which allow them to be performed (Cass & Falconbridge, 2016). Additionally,

using a practice theory lens allows the interpretation and analysis of the patterns within people's daily lives (Petersen, 2013). Therefore, a practice theory framework can be used to explore people's interactions with urban green space, their daily actions which could be performed in urban green space but yet are not, and the reasons given for not doing so. This suggests that it is possible to identify potential areas where urban green space interaction could be increased, with the materials, competences, and meanings relating to the urban green space experience ripe for consideration, to be highlighted, exploited, or augmented so that people's engagement with this type of space can be improved.

The different uses of urban green space can be described as individual practices on their own terms. For example, the interdependent elements which constitute the use of urban green space as an arena for physical activity would be different from those which allow contemplation and relaxation. Petersen (2013) explains, however, that urban green spaces have a commonality in the materials available to the potential user which shape the practices performed within. Materials in this case are still classed as 'things', as objects which afford human interaction, for example, trees as shelter or shade, paths with distinctive destinations, or lawns which provide space for sport and leisure. These affordances can be determined by human interaction, with the human actor prescribing function and meaning to the material object and its environment. Conversely, practices and behaviours can also be restricted by the possibilities offered by materials, and it is within this influence we should expect to find information relating to barriers which prevent routine engagement with green space. By investigating the actant functions of materials available to the green space user, their roles and impact can be explored. Prohibitive material factors can then be identified and, given an applied solution, alleviated by practical modification.

The concept of understanding routinised social practices is emphasised by Hitchings (2010), who queries how behavioural norms become embedded in groups of people. Hitchings (2010) contemplates that spending time in urban green space is an activity generally under competition from other established habits, and that sometimes, whether due to societal assimilation or preoccupation, going outside either isn't a consideration, or people often simply forget that it could be.

This brings meanings and competences into the discussion. We need reasons to engage with green space: the what to do and why. Meanings can be assigned to the act of exercising, relaxing, socialising, playing, connecting to nature, or even working, but adverse connotations can hinder the decision to step outside. Hitchings (2013) found that interviewees were reluctant to use green space during working hours specifically because of associated meanings: they might feel too relaxed to be efficiently productive for the remainder of the day; they were concerned about how they might be perceived by their peers. Crucially, investigating the meanings surrounding the use and avoidance of urban green space could uncover directions for change. Petersen (2013) further discusses competencies, and explains that once we've decided to use green space we need some basic knowledge of how to do so. For example, how to enjoy a private moment of relaxation in an otherwise public space, how

to access technology in the outdoors, or how to integrate with sports facilities. If we are concerned with increasing our engagement with urban green space, we might consider how to hold meetings outdoors, how to dress appropriately, or how to maintain a professional decorum after spending time there.

Cass and Falconbridge (2016) discuss bringing the insight offered by practice theory into decision making and policy, explaining that changes in practice are dependent upon providing access to suitable materials, on educating human actors to increase their knowledge and competence, and by having actors assign and incorporate meanings to their behaviour. Cass and Falconbridge (2016) offer an example through their research into factors which inhibit modal shift in commuting practices, inferring that change relies on access to and integration with: materials, such as public transport services, cycling facilities and equipment, and cycling clothing and changing facilities; competences, such as cycling proficiency, or timetable navigation; meanings, such as relaxing or working on public transport journeys, or intentionally using the cycle commute as exercise. This exemplifies how deconstructing a practice, or a set of associated practices, into its component elements can help to index the intricacies involved, therefore providing an opportunity to identify insufficiencies and absences of particular elements. Hence, using practice theory as a lens through which to view peoples connection with urban green space can help to intimately recognise areas in need of improvement, which can then be addressed through policy at societal level. Due to the detail of insight offered by practice theory, interventions can be prescribed to confront not only the immediate preoccupations and barriers, but more deep rooted, fundamental complications can be understood and tackled.

Shove, Pantzar, and Watson (2012) emphasise that practice theory does not offer a template for ways in which policy or practices can be changed, rather it can be used to frame the way in which problems can be defined and understood. Practice theory cannot tell us what to do, but it can provide an intellectual framework from which challenges can be addressed, assisting with policy intervention by offering a systematic base for conceptual explanations.

Chapter 5 - Findings and Discussion

This chapter reports and investigates the findings from the primary data analysis. Beginning with an account of the site observation phase, this section will further discuss the pertinent aspects of the participant diaries and then explore the dominant findings from the focus group and interview sessions. The research was primarily interested in two overarching themes: what was stopping participants from using urban green spaces as part of their daily routines: uncovering practices that utilise urban green space, which may be of interest to participants.

5.1 - Site Observations

Introduction

Areas of green space local to participant's daily routines were observed in order to recognise and understand the provision of the urban green spaces available. The project was not wholly concerned with assessing, measuring, or comparing quantifiable site values, but the question of amenity, facilities, and quality would certainly be central to any discussion relating to the reasons for electing to use a space, or not. A personal visit to the sites provided the opportunity to experience the participant's immediate environments, and allow a systematic contextualisation using a bespoke tool to investigate and record influential phenomena.

A data collection instrument designed specifically for this project (appendix 5) was taken into the field and used to prompt the observation exercise and to catalogue findings. The data collection tool was deployed in each of the designated areas, with consideration given to each attribute marked on the data collection sheet. Observation sessions were undertaken during daylight, with duration lasting for one hour. A summary of the main findings follows.

University of Salford – Key Findings

The Study Site

The University of Salford consists of approximately twenty five main buildings contained within a campus site of approximately half of one square mile. The campus is bisected by a

main railway line through Salford Crescent station, and bordered by the River Irwell to the east, the A6 carriageway to the south, and the residential areas of Pendleton and Lower Broughton to the west and north respectively. The site is mostly pedestrianised: there are several internal access roads, with one through road running almost parallel to the railway line. The bordering infrastructure effectively restricts further built expansion of the main campus site, and recent building developments have utilised available internal space by restructuring the inner core design. Campus refurbishment has been underway since 2015, and has seen older, outmoded buildings demolished to make way for up to date facilities: established green spaces were forfeited to house new infrastructures and to act as temporary building site for the construction. Any green space lost to the development has since been replaced by an innovative landscaping of the central campus area. Newly laid lawns, coupled with a concerted joint effort with Salford City Council to open up the neighbouring Peel Park area, has helped to provide a noticeable provision of green space for users of the University.

Defining the area for the study site was dependent upon the identification of green spaces near to the participants general daily routine. The University of Salford participants taking part in this study were commonly based in and around the Peel Building, located at the A6 side of the campus site (figure 3). This was fortuitous, leaving the study site classification as a relatively simple process. A degree of reasonable assumption was used to identify green spaces within a practical distance from Peel Building, not more than a loosely defined couple of minutes' walk away. If, during later methods, a participant should highlight an area of green space not under consideration of the site observation exercise, steps would be made to incorporate the new information into the research findings.

A desk top review of the area using Google Earth software was used to reveal probable areas for consideration. It should be noted that this researcher has had some familiarity with the grounds, having studied at the University of Salford for several years. This awareness was used to an advantage: rather than attempting to idealise the study site with neutrality, prior knowledge of the site offered an experienced insight into potential study locations, recent site changes, and any noteworthy user conduct or activity. A draft of potential study areas was then taken on a reconnaissance visit to the site in order to be confirmed. The field visit was used to identify any main areas of green space which might have been overlooked during the desk top review, or were unknown to the researcher. The main pockets of green space identified were: Peel Lawn and its surrounding verges; a small garden between Peel carpark and the Cockroft Building; the square formed by the New Adelphi Building, Chapman Building, and the Clifford Whitworth Library; the new lawns on the former Horlock Building site; Peel Park; The Meadows. These spaces have been named accordingly to simplify their descriptions.

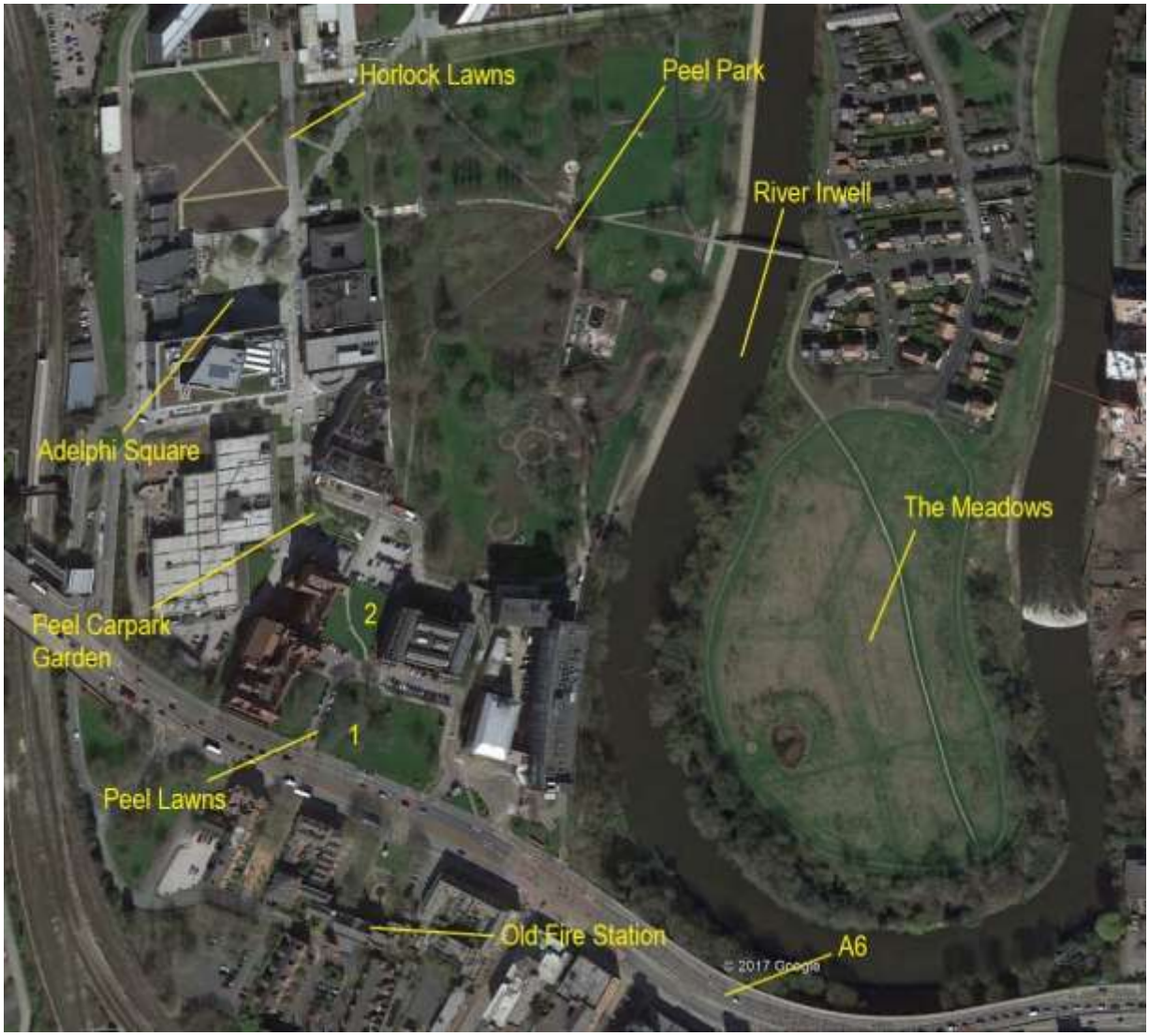

Fig 3 - Arial image of the University of Salford study site, with key areas highlighted (Google Earth Pro, 2017).

Peel Lawns

There were two large lawn areas outside Peel Building, separated by a tarmac carpark/entrance to Peel (marked 1 and 2 on figure 3).

Fig 4 - Peel Lawns (1) (photograph - researchers own).

1 – The lawn opposite Salford Museum and Art Gallery was the size of a football field, with short grass, approximately fifteen trees, two statues, and one dormant structure (figure 4). It was bisected by a tarmac path/road, which was used as pedestrian entry from the A6, and for overspill parking. It was bordered by Peel Building, the A6, a carpark, and a university access road. Access was universal and easy – there were clear entry points from the A6, and no other fences. The area was free from litter and graffiti, and litter bins surrounded the lawn. There were no footpaths, benches, or tables, with no screening from the A6 or carpark. The weather held glorious sunshine; during lunchtime no-one was using this space except for the occasional shortcut. The grass was dry, the ground was firm, the trees offered cooling shade. Notable sounds included: a steady thrum of traffic noise; birds in the trees; chatter from passing pedestrians; leaf blower; deliveries; sirens. The smells of cooking aromas reached the lawns from the nearby Maxwell kitchens. It felt safe: there were plenty of people around, and the University security hut was in sight. There was wifi access, but a distinct lack of infrastructure or facilities. There was a ‘keep off the grass sign’ which was damaged and ineffective, yet there were no informal pathways.

2 – The undulating lawn in between Peel Building and Salford Museum was slightly larger than a tennis court, with short grass, a few sapling trees, low maintenance garden borders, and a clear tarmac path splitting the area in two (figure 5). One steel bench sat on the path, with access to a litter bin. Used predominantly as thoroughfare, this space had people traversing through it all day, with masses of students at a time changing buildings between lectures. It was clean, tidy, and evidently maintained by the University grounds staff. The area was almost litter free, save for discarded cigarette butts around the steel bench. The space was attractive: the garden borders were clearly looked after; the views took in tree lines and well-maintained buildings. The space was certainly overlooked – surrounded by two buildings and two carparks – and felt open, safe, and accessible. No-one was using the grass, and there was no prohibitive signage. The sound of traffic was quieter here in relation to Lawn 1, but there was noise from a bordering carpark used as a temporary building site while works were carried out nearby. Again, there were no tables, and no obvious encouragement of enticement to use the grass.

Fig 5 - Peel Lawns (2) (photograph, researchers own).

Peel Carpark Garden

This garden (figure 6 overleaf) filled a space adjoining Peel carpark and an access road to the campus centre. It had a path traversing through it, and a mix of permeable and paved surfaces. The path was not frequented by pedestrian traffic as much as the access road which runs parallel to it. Three benches provided the opportunity for seating, though they were dispersed, and a large willow offered shade (figure 6). There was through access for

wheelchair users. The garden was surrounded by activity: passing traffic, cars parking, building work, and pedestrian movement all contribute to a constant bustle, which was not unpleasant but certainly distracting. The garden was landscaped with ornamental wildflowers, bushes, shrubs and trees, and subjected to regular maintenance (figure 7). It was free from litter and discarded cigarette stubs, perhaps surprising as there were no litter bins.

Fig 6 - Peel carpark garden, lawn, pathway, and seating (photograph, researchers own).

Fig 7 - Peel carpark garden: Peel Building, lawn, bench, permeable paving, maintenance (photograph, researchers own).

The colourful, fragrant plants and freshly cut grass added a freshness to the space, which was populated with birds, and bees hovering between the flowers. Unestablished climbing plants were training around a large, wooden pergola, under which sat another wooden bench. The garden was overlooked by two large buildings, and felt secure due to the amount of people nearby. However, the space was only used as thoroughfare during observation, and even then the overwhelming majority of passers-by opted to walk around it rather than through it. Wifi was available here, but again, there were no tables. The openness of the space left it feeling exposed, and without privacy.

The Adelphi Square

This newly developed square was situated in the heart of the University campus, and hosted continuous footfall throughout the day. Traffic was very rare, and restricted to essential access for the University Estates and Property Services department. The design provided easy pedestrian access to the Clifford Whitworth Library Building and the renovated Chapman Building, and incorporated a gateway path from Salford Crescent train station and the New Adelphi Building through the campus to the newly constructed halls of residence buildings. The old causeway and several buildings have been demolished and removed to make way for a low maintenance, open square, with wide pathways and extensive views. Green spaces have been included to break up the expanse of concrete and Kelem block paving, and many of the established trees remain (figure 8). New lawn areas have been added to compensate for any green space losses. Construction has taken approximately three years.

Fig 8 - Stepped seating, Kelem block paving, and raised lawn at Adelphi Square (photograph, researchers own).

The space was bright and airy, and accessible from four open corners. Wide block paved boulevards extended the central space, creating further the impression of openness. Stepped seating areas offered the chance to rest or socialise, with raised lawns surrounded by stone borders presenting more seating opportunities. A mini-supermarket shop had provided an outdoor seating area with several tables, frequented by coffee drinkers and smokers. Perceptions of fear and safety were overwhelmingly positive: the area was occupied almost

entirely during the day, with visible security measures consisting of CCTV and guard patrols, and three large buildings overlooking the space. The adjoining buildings housed coffee shops, cafeterias, and convenience stores or kiosks, with the associated smells of fresh coffee and cooking permeating the square. Cigarette smoke hung around the building entrances, particularly under the library's canopied doorway. While the weather was dry, people sat throughout the space, eating, chatting, and smoking. There was wifi access throughout the square, and many people sat alone around the raised lawn areas, reading their mobile phones during a five minute smoke break from work or study alike. The raised lawns augmented the green-ness of the space, without being big enough to contain impromptu ball games.

This space presented an opportunity for social engagement by offering at least somewhere dry to sit in good weather. The expansive boulevards held the potential to host University events, such as markets, displays, or freshers week stalls, and grant a swift thoroughfare for the huge numbers of students who moved through this space en masse to attend timed lectures in the nearby lecture theatres. Trees acted as shade from the sun and as a windbreak from the large open spaces of the adjacent former Horlock Building site. The space was almost free from litter but for collected areas of cigarette stubs, with no sign of graffiti.

Horlock Lawns

Several buildings have been removed from this large area during the recent development of the campus centre, and planners have opted to leave a sizeable space as open green fields (figure 9). Some of the grassed areas were newly laid, and were still bedding in: they were cordoned off using wire fencing and shrubbery borders, while quirky University endorsed signage requests that the grass was not to be used until it is officially ready. Other patches of lawn remained as remnants from the previous site design, and were open for use.

Figure 9 (overleaf) shows the proximity of the fields to one of the university accommodation buildings, and it is expected that these fields will be frequented mostly by residents. However, Horlock Lawns are only two minutes' walk from the Peel Building entrance, and are therefore worthy of consideration. The space was contained within the campus grounds, bordered by University buildings, Peel Park, Adelphi Square, and University Road, which runs parallel to the railway lines. Two new concourse pathways leading from the Adelphi Square passed through this area, leading to two separate accommodation blocks (figure 10). Fixtures and fittings included several seating opportunities, litter bins, lighting, signage information, signposts, and restrictive barriers: the paved areas can be used as access roads for internal University vehicles.

Fig 9 - Fencing and lawns at Horlock (photograph, researchers own).

Fig 10 - Concourse routes through Horlock from Adelphi Square (photograph, researchers own).

The wide open aspect created lengthy views with large skies, with little shelter from an ever present breeze. This exposure had not dissuaded people from using the seating areas, and that people were sat relaxing or talking helped to create a convivial atmosphere as other people passed by. Closer to the accommodation buildings, University staff sat eating and chatting outside University House, which contains administration services and the student

union bar. There were bicycle sheds, seats, benches, and litter bins available throughout the area, which were maintained and cleaned by the University services.

Wildlife spotted included several pigeons, seagulls, blackbirds, common sparrows, and several squirrels. Animals appeared to be at ease in this space, certainly away from the concourse and under the shelter of the trees.

Peel Park

Peel Park is a large urban park currently undergoing a £1.6 million Heritage Lottery funded regeneration programme (Salford City Council, 2017). It adjoins the University of Salford, and its proximity and future potential demands particular attention under this research study. Named after Sir Robert Peel, the park has had periods of success and neglect over its one hundred and fifty year history, and has expanded to include the David Lewis Sports Grounds to the north, and the Crescent Meadow, a relatively natural open green space to the south east (Salford City Council, 2017). The park is owned and maintained by Salford City Council, who are managing the regeneration project with input from the surrounding community. Access from the University grounds via steps from the south and west is prohibited due to ongoing renovation (figure 11). Pedestrian, wheelchair and vehicle access is available via a service road directly from the A6, from a housing estate to the east using a reconditioned footbridge over the River Irwell, and via steps from the student residential buildings occupying the northern boundary.

Fig 11 - Peel Park, tree removal and western steps access under renovation (photograph, researchers own).

Several development phases have been completed, with the reconstructive work expected to finish by the end of summer 2017 (Salford City Council, 2017). The park has suffered a poor reputation in the area due to incidents of violent crime and robbery, and consequently, local residents and University users have stayed away from the secluded area: a concern for the developers has been how to attract cautious potential users back into the space (Salford City Council, 2017). Large clusters of established trees have been removed to reduce the imposition of thick canopies, creating less claustrophobic, more accessible vistas, wider, more inviting, open spaces, and cleaner sight lines (figure 12). External and internal views have been improved by removing perimeter trees and foilage: the main body of the park can now be seen from bordering paths parallel to the University and the River Irwell, while the service road has benefitted from having its overgrown bushes cut back. Opening up the park in this way has removed the secluded, sheltered aspect of the space.

Fig 12 - Newly created open spaces in Peel Park (photograph, researchers own).

Numerous original statues and sculptures have been renovated and presented as park features with surrounding seating and access pathways. Previous limestone gravel tracks have been replaced with clean tarmac paths throughout the park. Benches and bins have been replaced, and the children's play area has been overhauled to provide an interesting, user friendly proposition, leaving a genuine attraction for local residents. The renovation of the eastern footbridge over the River Irwell has improved accessibility with the inclusion of wide entrance steps, new wheelchair friendly ramps, and the removal of visually restrictive bushes (figure 13).

The presence of site development limited observations by reducing the amount of space available: access points, pathways, and large areas were cordoned off while under repair, and for health and safety purposes. Furthermore, much of the anticipated provision of furniture had been removed: benches, litter bins, and lighting would be replaced soon according to signage describing the development stages, but its absence meant any genuine effort to describe elements and qualities within the park would be temporally hindered, and imminently redundant. Signage and information was minimal, however, the ongoing development surely illustrates the council's commitment to maintenance and management. Despite the upheaval, key observations could still be captured.

Fig 13 - Eastern access improvement (photograph, researchers own).

Noise from the nearby city could be heard from a distance as a muted continuous thrum, but otherwise, the space was audibly peaceful. This was noticeable when entering this location from the A6: the boundary trees, although thinned out, still dampened the city noise from sirens, alarms, construction, and continuous traffic. Crows, magpies, and smaller birdsong could be heard throughout the site. The earthy, fresh smell of damp soil arose from the sizeable grassed areas, while a cooling breeze was ever present across the open spaces. The cooling effect of trans-evaporation from the larger trees could be felt on the skin, while the remaining canopies provided shade from the sun and shelter from the breeze.

The children's play area was busy, with several of family units enjoying the facility. Two large grassed fields were being used by family groups playing football and informal cricket, and by

couples sat on picnic blankets. People of all ages and ethnicities walked the many paths which surround and cross the space, including dog walkers, strollers, and joggers.

Previous visits to the space had left the impression of an imposing, uninviting, unloved, sterile environment, but the recent work had changed this perception entirely. The removal of established tree lines, although understandably controversial, had achieved in presenting the space as an inviting, accessible plain, rather than an unappealing proposition with obscured risks. A busy walkway next to the university could now be seen from the centre of the park, reinforcing a sense of safety which had not been present in recent times. The presence of other people in the park, coupled with the new, open, panoramic views, helped to create a welcoming, attractive space. The decluttering of tree lines has allowed bright sunshine and large expanses of blue sky to become part of the experience.

The Meadows

The Meadows has been incorporated into Peel Park, and offers an alternative amenity to the sanitised, orderly arrangement of Peel Park itself. This large open space (figure 14 overleaf) is controlled by Salford City Council, who have recently completed improvements to make the space more accessible and more traversable. This space had been left largely untouched by the authority, but had continued to be used by local residents as a place to walk, jog, and walk dogs. Work throughout 2015 saw limestone pathways replace well-worn informal tracks, and the removal of perimeter trees to open up views. Further improvements include the creation of a wetland wildlife area with seating and information boards, and extensive woodland and meadow planting, to create an interesting space intended to be well used.

Seating throughout The Meadows had been built using reclaimed wood taken from the site renovation, and was in keeping with the rugged nature of the space. Improvements had not overly sanitised the environment: care had been taken to uphold the natural feel of the space, with large perimeter sections left to wild succession. There was no attempt at lighting the area.

There were no comfort facilities to speak of. Good quality signage posted the way to internal and nearby attractions, while access from the River Irwell footbridge area and from the local residential estate was wide and unhindered by barriers. The northern edge of the fields touched the local housing estate, which had almost free sightlines across the space. There were dogwalkers, runners, and a couple of families out for a walk: no-one strayed from the footpath to cross the field, even though the ground felt firm. The paths were free from dog fouling (one hoped this was due to conscientious dog owners rather than a discourteous use of the grassland. The presence of others, the clean sightlines, and the close proximity of so many house windows helped to create a sense of personal security which was welcome in such a secluded site.

Fig 14 - The Meadows, local housing, urban construction, and signage (photograph, researchers own).

The skyline was mostly unimpeded but for several cranes and new structures at a nearby construction site. Standing in the centre of the open space one could hear noise from the nearby built environment: it was possible to hear distant trains, traffic, construction, and sirens, but not the surrounding river. Walking the perimeter took around five minutes, and noises from urban activities nearby were certainly louder. The Irwell became a more imposing feature closer to its banks. Despite the inclusion of built structures on the horizon, the space felt isolated, remote, and peaceful. There was no evidence of wildlife except for a few birds, though signage suggested that there was an abundance of non-specific animals habituating in and around The Meadows.

Salford City Council (2017) proclaims that the space 'has been transformed into an urban oasis', and in terms of refuge from the surrounding cityscape environment it was difficult to disagree. Access from the Peel Building, the operating point of this observation exercise, took approximately seven minutes walking through Peel Park and over the Irwell footbridge. Inclusion of The Meadows for this study was deemed important due to its geographical location: parts of The Meadow were closer to Peel Building than parts of Peel Park and Horlock Lawns, and swift access was only restricted due to the available infrastructure.

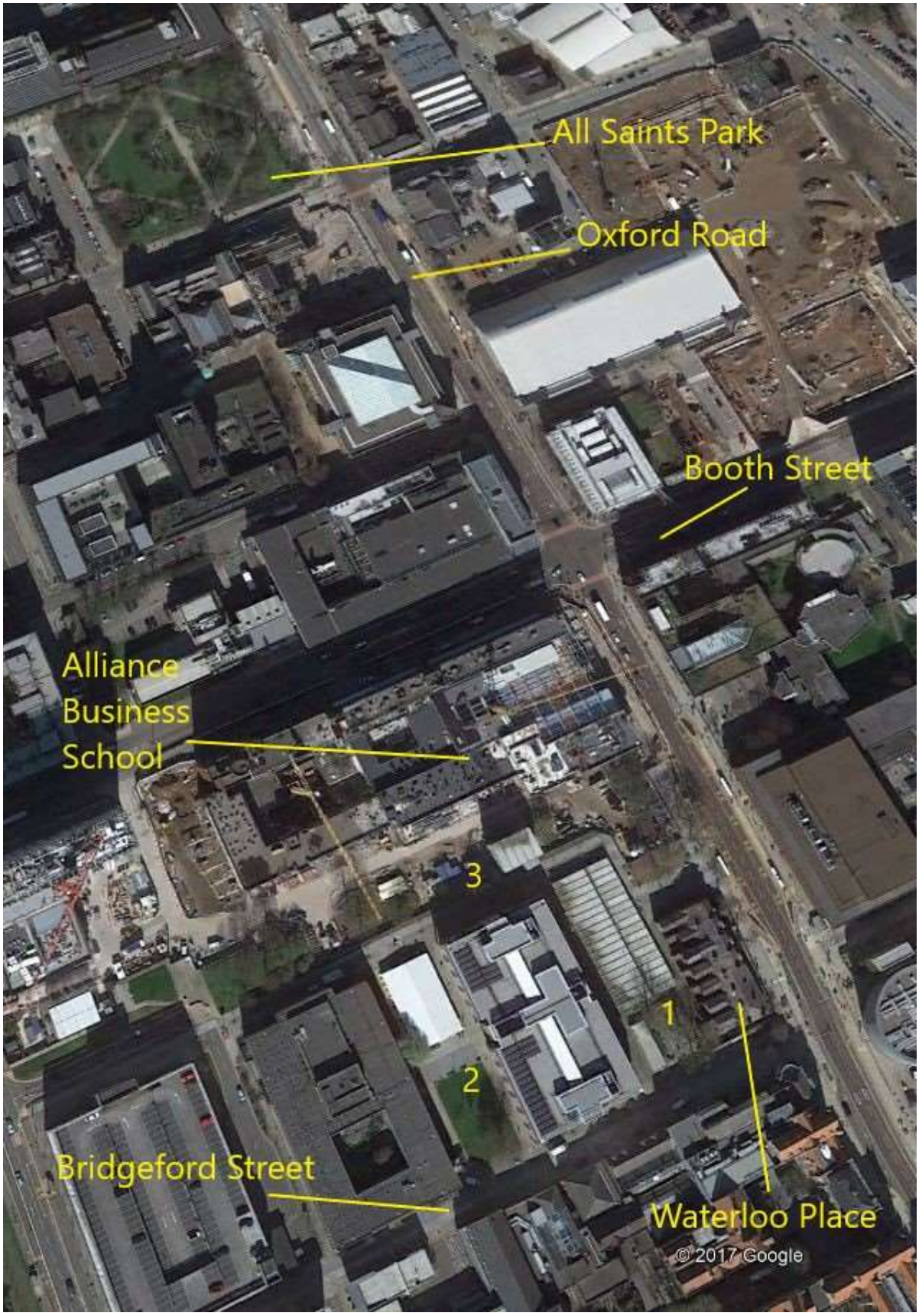

Fig 15 - Arial image of the University of Manchester study site, with key areas highlighted (Google Earth Pro, 2017)

University of Manchester – Key Findings

The Study Site

The University of Manchester campus grounds are situated on two sites in Manchester city centre. Participant interest from the University of Manchester centred around a set of buildings on Oxford Road, at Waterloo Place (figure 15 previous page). The densely populated urban environment of Oxford Road presents a different set of challenges from the University of Salford site for green space users and planners alike. Space is at a premium: with established buildings nestling between clusters of redevelopment, this area of Manchester is a truly dynamic example of Landry's (2007) ever changing cityscape. Green space protection and promotion efforts compete with justification for other land uses, while users must seek out green space sites to interact with amongst busy arterial roads, heavy traffic, building sites, and huge buildings. It was anticipated that any key study areas would most likely be established over a long period of time, and under the protection of the local authorities.

In order to identify potential areas of interest, Google Earth Pro software was used remotely to scope the area surrounding Waterloo Place. A list of likely areas was taken into the field to discover their suitability for consideration first hand. It was at this point that the importance of formative planning in research was illustrated: the site visit revealed a major discrepancy between what was expected to be found, and what was actually there. Figure 16 (overleaf) shows imagery of an area near to the Alliance Business School, and behind Waterloo Place. The top image was sourced before the preliminary site visit, the second retrieved much later in the research process for this comparison. The top image clearly shows landscaped areas of urban green space at area '3', with a smaller lawn leading towards area '2'. Key reconstruction work has been undertaken on the Alliance Business School over summer, and the second image taken by Landsat satellite during this period shows an update of proceedings. Area '3' was almost obliterated by heavy plant machinery, aggregate storage, site offices, and works access. The lawn leading from area '3' to area '2' now hosted a Blackwells Bookshop within a prefabricated temporary building. The end result of any observation exercise would surely be markedly different than if the research had been carried out earlier in the year, but this recent development had presented an opportunity to discuss further the importance of good quality, close proximity, urban green space provision, and explore whether participants would feel the urge to travel in its absence.

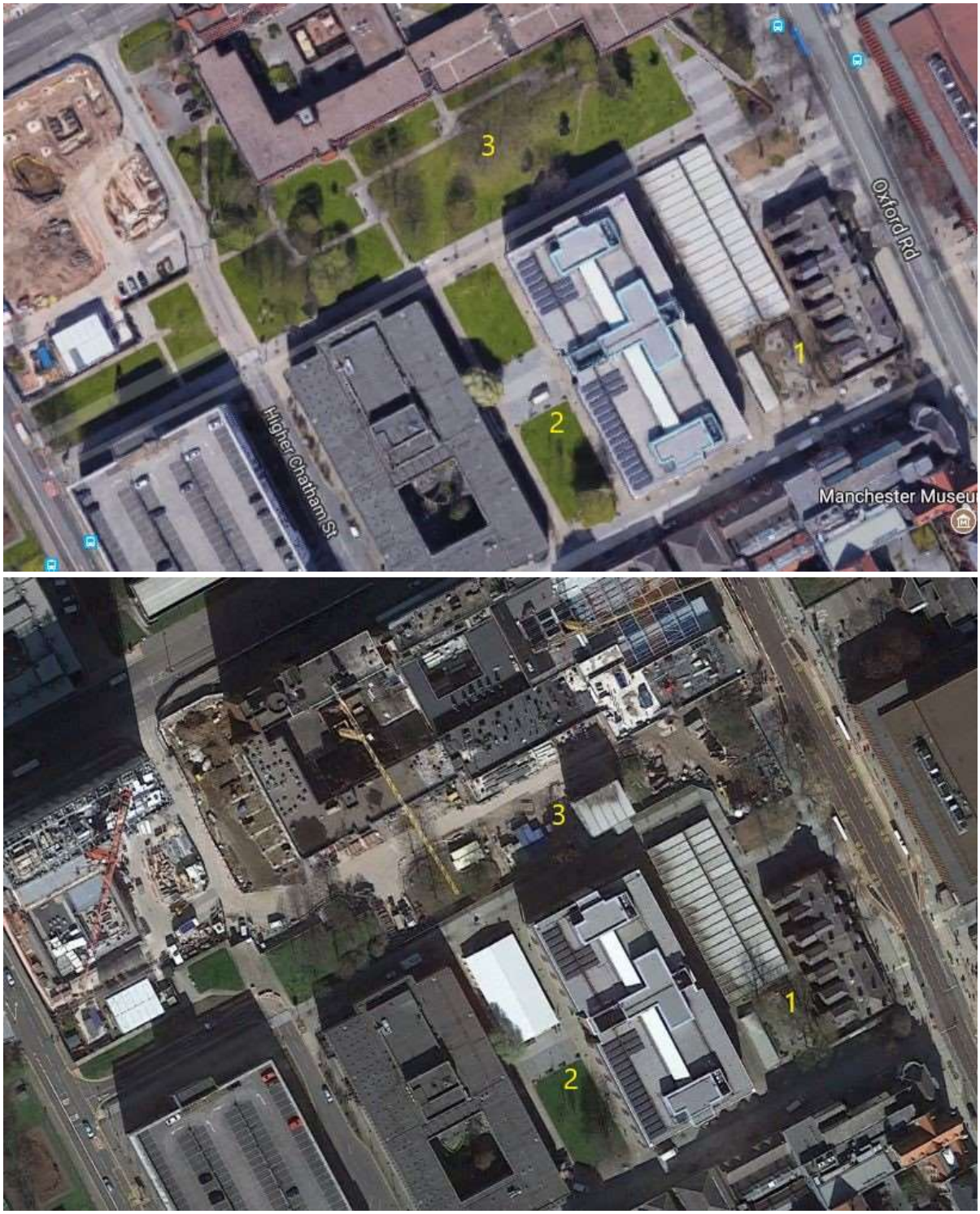

Fig 16 - Key study areas 1, 2, 3, before and after local building reconstruction (Google Earth Pro, 2017)

The green space areas in close proximity to Waterloo Place buildings could still be observed, leading to a discussion concerning the impact of urban development on green space quality, and of how the spaces were perceived at that point in time. The areas under consideration were determined to be: the garden behind Waterloo Place; the lawn area adjacent to Bridgeford Street; the Alliance Business School lawns; All Saints Park. Once again, a crude

supposition was taken to include areas within an approximate couple of minutes' walk from Waterloo Place.

Waterloo Place Garden

Waterloo Place is a set of seven large, grade two listed terraced townhouses dating back to 1832 (British Listed Buildings, 2017). The rear of the properties backs onto a small terrace garden, approximately the size of a badminton court (marked '1', figure 16). It is accessed via Bridgeford Street, a pedestrianised road leading from Oxford Road (University service vehicles are granted special access). Figure 17 illustrates a view of the townhouses from across the garden.

Fig 17 - Waterloo Place Garden, view from a bench (photograph, researchers own).

The garden was entirely gravelled, with occasional paving and large boulders placed throughout for decorative effect. Several established trees dotted the low hedge borders, and organised clusters of small bushes and foliage added to the green cover, creating a rockery style garden. The space was shaded by adjoining buildings and tree canopy, creating a welcome respite from the early afternoon sun. There were no litterbins, though the garden was almost free from litter. Fallen branches scattered the ground, and weeds and grasses had started to permeate the gravel, creating an untidiness to the otherwise pristine space. Several steel tube benches aligned two sides of the quadrangle, where a few individual smokers sat

reading their mobile phones. Their dress suggested that they might be very local office workers, with lanyards and ties in view, while the short duration of their visits indicated that the garden is a known spot for a quick smoke break.

No wildlife was spotted in this small plot. The noise from traffic and construction was powerful with Oxford road and several developments nearby, but moving into this space from Oxford Road offered some relief from aural and visual activity. It would be difficult to suggest that this garden was a relaxing place, but it certainly offered the opportunity to take a breather from the city flow.

Bridgeford Street Lawns

Two tennis court sized lawns (marked '2' on figure 16) had been reduced to one due to the temporary housing of a book shop in this pedestrianised space, about a one minute walk from Waterloo Place. The brief intrusion will last until the redevelopment of its regular home in the Alliance Business Centre has been completed. The remaining lawn is featureless, and looked entirely pristine, as if it had never been walked upon. A flagged pathway surrounded the lawn, leading pedestrians from Bridgeford Street to the Alliance Business School area.

The lawn was overlooked from three sides by tall buildings with whole sides of windows: the fourth side was under construction. Low numbers of footfall passed through, and though the main entrance for the bookshop sat on the square, most of the customers used a café entrance facing the Alliance Business Centre. The space did not feel secluded or private in any way despite being so underpopulated. There were two steel tube benches which faced away from the grass towards the bookshop, otherwise there were no seating opportunities. Two litter bins helped to dispose of take-out coffee cups from the bookshop café, but there were no other items of furniture.

Noise from the nearby city was apparent yet dampened. There were no vehicle access points adjacent to this space, and during the observation session, construction next door had paused leaving some relative tranquillity. The whole green space had an ornamental quality: it did not appear to be a space to be used by anyone, for any particular purpose.

Alliance Business School Lawns

This set of lawns had been almost entirely sacrificed to house the reconstruction effort on the Alliance School Building (marked '3' on figure 16). The main area was boarded, but visible building equipment, materials, and machinery clearly dominated the space (figure 18).

Fig 18 - Building work at Alliance Business School (photograph, researchers own)

A tree lined service road passed through the area, still accessible by foot. Large trees could be seen from outside the construction site, which had cordoned around established trees at the perimeter of the site. Small patches of grass were still accessible where the building site has not claimed use, but the works were so imposing as to leave the green space redundant. Information on the build adorned the boarding: the work is expected to be completed early in 2018, and plans included a reconditioning of the lawn area. This large area was approximately two minutes' walk from Waterloo Place, and when opened, could provide an attractive green space facility.

All Saints Park

All Saints Park had been included within the observation phase of this research as an alternative to the Alliance School Lawns, under the reasonable assumption that participants might travel further to seek out green space if it was absent nearby. The area was situated on Oxford road, set back from the traffic by ten meters of wide pavement, about four minutes' walk from Waterloo Place. It was surrounded by University buildings from both Manchester and Manchester Metropolitan institutions. These buildings were a mixture of administration

and student facilities, making All Saints Park immediately available to situational students and staff alike.

Fig 19 - Grassed area at All Saints Park (photograph, researchers own).

Figure 19 (previous page) illustrates the conditions on the afternoon of the observation session. The sun shone through a cloudless sky, and though large parts of the park were exposed, there was very little breeze. This space was busy, populated by many groups students arriving from the adjoining MMU Business School, by groups of workmen from the nearby construction sites, and by single users taking short breaks. Close proximity to Oxford Road meant that heavy traffic was continuously heard throughout the park, but this did not appear to deter people from spending time here. Access was available from all four sides of this square urban park via a combination of steps and flat entry for wheel chair users.

Seating opportunities were plentiful in All Saints Park, with a mixture of stone, wooden, and steel seating, however, every seat was taken. A period of dry weather had hardened the ground, and many people seemed happy to sit directly on the grassed areas, either in groups or alone, in the sunshine or under shade from the numerous trees. The sound of people talking together was clear, the park used as an opportunity to catch up with colleagues and friends, or make phone calls. This space was being used by people socialising, eating late lunch, taking smoke breaks, reading, and playing Frisbee. A marquee hosted a University sponsored cooking event, and a small crowd had gathered.

The air was alive with different smells from around the space: the cooking event was underway with the fresh, vibrant zing of Thai food; a hotdog van was parked at the Oxford Road entrance; cigarette smoke drifted around most of the area; burning cannabis wafted from various spots, both sheltered and out in the open. The sheltered spaces were not particularly secluded, more the presence of bushes and ornamental garden sections presented the opportunity to steal away from the open lawns for some groups.

Concrete pathways crossing the space diagonally meant that the busy footfall ran throughout, though the dry ground granted clean shortcuts in any direction. The presence of so many other people either in the space or passing by its visible perimeter pavements promoted a sense of security in numbers, and gave the impression of an area one would be welcome in by virtue of going unnoticed. Other people were evidently relaxed enough to sunbathe alone, while others openly used laptops with apparent confidence in other park users.

Litter bins and grounds staff were present, and though it might be expected that after such heavy use the park might become dishevelled, people could be seen to use the bins or take their rubbish with them. Throughout the session, people continuously arrived and left: the space did not empty late into the afternoon, suggesting that this spot is known and popular in good weather.

Comment

Temporal and seasonal factors have naturally had an influence on the site observation phase of this project. The sessions were all undertaken during the day in early summer, 2017, under bright, dry weather conditions, and after a period of good meteorological conditions. Naturally, this exercise might return different results if it was performed under more inclement weather conditions or at a later time in the evening.

The time restraints of the project limited the opportunity to perform a longitudinal study, which would be needed to uncover a genuine account of the areas visited. However, the snapshot illustrations provided by this research would be sufficient to summarise the elements and qualities of urban green spaces immediately available to the participants daily routines, allowing the summary of overall provision and ultimately helping with question formation for the following interview sessions.

Participants based at the University of Salford had good access to different types of contained urban green space, from secluded fields of rugged grass, to small ornamental gardens. Hard surface footpaths offered a network of clean pedestrian access to all sites from anywhere in the campus, while seating was provided in areas of heavier thoroughfare. Personal security and facility safety was good, with populated, sanitised areas suitable for work, rest, or play within reasonable distance. Site security consisted of CCTV coverage, and visible security guard patrols. Continued maintenance from different land custodians was evident. The

overall perception of the observed sites was of attractive, welcoming spaces which were asking to be occupied more than they were.

The University of Manchester participants had something of a different provision, regardless of the disruptive building construction underway. Smaller green spaces nestled under the shadow of the city, subjected to intensified sensory stimulus from heavy traffic and busy urban living. Popular spaces were frequented by many people, helping to increase feelings of personal security. Pockets of apparent green tranquillity went largely unnoticed, yet the proximity of much busier spaces instilled feelings of security. The smaller spaces restricted provision: for example, it would be difficult to exercise or participate in any sporting activity here.

The observation exercise helped to ground an understanding of the types of provision offered by the green spaces immediately available to the participant's daily routines. This facilitated the thematic discourse of the focus group and interview schedules, and provided contextualisation for the researcher during these sessions.

5.2 - Participant Diaries

Introduction

The project is interested in barriers which prevent people's engagement with urban green space. Analysis concentrated on: factors which prevented or discouraged the use of urban green space; specific reasons given for not using green space; missed opportunities to engage with green space; unintentional experiences. Furthermore, care was taken to recognise related elements of social practice theory within each account.

Participants were asked to record their general activities and experiences with green space over a week long period. The aim of this process was to reveal how participants might perceive green spaces and how they interacted with them, and to show what other practices and obligations they might have in their routines which do not involve urban green space. Each participant presented their diary as a typical working week. This was important as the research needed access to daily routine and how green space engagement might be increased within it. All participants spent at least four days of the recorded week at their place of work or study. The information retrieved from the participant diaries was used to recognise main themes, and to subsequently form the interview schedules for the focus group and interview sessions. NVivo software was used to present and examine the returned data, with a coding exercise used to identify pertinent aspects, patterns, and relationships. What follows is a summary of the key findings and a discussion surrounding the main themes which emerged during coding analysis.

Key Findings

Reasons for using green space

Participants were largely tuned into the research aims, and were candid about the times when green space was used or experienced under the 'Green Space and Other Comments' field of the diary. Good weather throughout the diary week presented the participants with the chance to go outdoors often, and without needing clothing designed for wet or cold weather. Many made the most of it: the Bank Holiday weekend had been enjoyed by visiting different types of green space for many reasons. The diary entries suggest that during that week at least, the participants were, with one notable exception, eager to be outside and find themselves in green space.

Participants travelling out used country parks to walk dogs, to spend time with family and friends, for exercise by walking, running, cycling, and sailing, and simply to experience some 'fresh air', and some 'peace and quiet'. Some of these excursions were to large, established park spaces with some form of notable attraction: a lake; a country house; a zoo. Active efforts to engage with nature mentioned the attraction of forest cover, open grassland, big skies, and wildlife. Other ventures included full day trips to national parks (for example, the

Lake District, Snowdonia) to walk and rock climb, and lengthy bike rides using established national cycle tracks taking in countryside and canal paths.

Travelling was not always necessary: local parks were sought out for both planned and impromptu visits, and used for similar reasons. The proximity of green space near to participants homes offered an immediacy for those obligated to routinely walk dogs, those who wanted to kick a football around with friends, and for those just wanting to leave the house and stretch their legs at a moment's notice.

Participants with gardens used them to relax and socialise. Several seized the opportunity to eat and study outside while the weather allowed it, while others were happy to describe tending to their gardens in intricate detail: decorative plants and vegetable plots were clearly in need of attention throughout a week of hot weather. Gardens were also mentioned as focal points to gaze upon from indoors while washing pots, cooking, working at a desk, or sat relaxing. Several entries simply stated that a garden had been seen at particular time, without any specific description of use.

Only a few instances of work and study uses in green space were declared. One participant took part in a bat survey, one of the very few instances of green space engagement during the evening and the only mention of green space after dark. Another mentioned taking part in a workshop which was relocated outdoors to take advantage of the weather. One was involved in a voluntary role with a local environmental group, and one particular session took place in the garden area of a local mill helping children plant seeds. Otherwise, gardens were used as the arena for reading, revision, and assignment planning.

Participants were keen to enthuse about the green spaces they had encountered away from the University campus, and generally speaking most experienced urban green space in one way or another almost every day. It might be considered that the people who agreed to take part in this study feel that they are engaging with green space enough in their lives, and that increasing green space access and available facilities near to their places of work or study is therefore moot. However, if we accept that engaging with green spaces is beneficial to us in numerous ways, then increasing contact time can only be seen as advantageous.

Unintended engagement with green space

Green space encounters were accounted for during explanations of other activities. Overwhelmingly, all participants described experience of green space while commuting or travelling. Possibly conscious of their obligation to the diary exercise, descriptions were detailed and frequent, describing tree lined walking routes, vast tracts of green covered land visible through train and car windows, decorative green spaces in city centres, and even grass verges near to bus stops and train stations. Choice of walking routes, particularly those used on a routine basis, were determined by opportunities to get away from traffic and into green

spaces, with participants utilising canal paths, cemeteries, and city parks to brighten up the commute.

Beer gardens and pedestrianised shopping precincts were included as primary destinations with aspects of urban green space, with planters, raised flower beds, and hanging baskets enough detail for some participants going about other business. Others noted green areas near to AstroTurf pitches during football and netball games. A recurring inclusion came from participants simply looking out of their office windows during moments of contemplation or daydreaming.

Some entries discussed travelling through University campus grounds, principally to get from one building to another, and campus green spaces were noted sporadically. Although each participant had spent time at their University throughout the week, some omitted to mention the available campus green space at all.

Reasons for not engaging with green space

Specific references to the avoidance of green space were missing throughout the diaries, with inference coming indirectly from descriptions of particular events. For example, a rare change in weather (for that week) brought a shower leaving one family outing to a country park running for cover. The good weather during the morning had naturally determined a choice of clothing not suitable for wet weather.

Participants talked about taking their dogs through familiar green spaces, opting to keep their pets on a lead due to the presence of other dog walkers, cyclists, runners, and children playing. The unknown contents of longer grass meant that some participants stuck to official pathways rather than chancing damage to their footwear from (at least) muddy conditions.

Participants suffering with cold symptoms opted to stay indoors rather than venture into available gardens, the misery of feeling ill sapping any consideration that fresh air, sunshine, and exposure to green space might have a palliative effect.

Experiences with city parks were perceived as negative by some diarists. Negotiating these spaces outside of working hours presented some participants with, *"…homeless people and other drug addicts, vomit everywhere on the floor.*" Another described occupants of a public city park: *"… a few people were out – some of them looked suspicious so I walked through quickly*."

One participant repeatedly described a desire to eat lunch in the sun outside of the office in local green spaces designed specifically for this, yet rarely did so due to strong winds, traffic and construction noise, and not having any company to enjoy.

Restricted access meant participants could not use green spaces. One mentioned green space cordoned off for the protection of ornamental integrity. Another experienced a familiar space

now boarded from access due to construction at a nearby building site, while others mentioned unavoidable restrictions due to ongoing remediation work on green space itself.

Missed opportunities to experience green space

Other reasons were less immediate and more concerned with preoccupations, or the choice of doing something indoors instead. Venturing outside was an option in competition with: playing video games; watching television; reading; socialising; relaxing.

Many participants described work obligations which kept them indoors. These generally involved activities which use computers, such as reading, revising, marking, and replying to seemingly endless amounts of email. However, other indoor activities included: attending formal meetings; conducting short, informal meetings; eating lunch; reading books; meeting with friends; relaxing; indoor climbing walls.

Perhaps due to an outward awareness of the focus of the project, participants consciously acknowledged times when they might have used green space as their location to perform various activities, yet chose not to. Lunch times were noted in particular, with one participant declaring, "*I eat at my desk too much*." Another described a typical lunchtime effort: "*Walked to the street food market that pops up next to my office on a Tuesday, got a burrito and ate it al desko."* 'Al desko' being, according to Cloake (2016), a depressing adverb which explains the lunchtime habit of eating at ones desk during the working day. Participants appeared to agree upon a generally apathetic approach towards actively seeking out green spaces at times when it was possible and reasonable to do so.

Comment

The diary exercise instigated some participants to really consider their routines and surroundings, helping to ready their engagement with the focus group and interview sessions. Some suggested that that they had been looking at green space in a different light during the process, conscious of how frequently or not they experienced and used it. Notable comments included one diarist who rekindled a previous interest in flora and fauna, noticing and contemplating specific types of plants along a walking section of a daily commute. Another commented that they valued green space more when relaxed and not thinking primarily of work.

The diary exercise helped to identify aspects of participants daily routines which did and did not include the use of urban green space, alongside reasons for not engaging with green space, and times where green space was encountered by proximity. Tables 2 and 3 (overleaf) summarise the key aspects of these findings.

Practices using green space	**Missed Opportunities**
Socialising with friends/family	Preferred choice of indoor activity
Dog walking	Work obligation: technological
Relaxing/leisure	Work obligation: other
Eating	Lunchtime
Study/work	
Exercise/sport	
Gardening	
Tourism	

Table 2 - Practices in green space and missed opportunities.

Unintended engagement with green space	**Reasons for not using green space**
Commuting/travelling	Inclement weather
Traffic avoidance	Poor condition of pathways
Destinations with green decoration	Ill health
Window views	Unattractive/antisocial space
	Negative perceptions of fear and safety
	Poor access
	Noise
	Work obligation
	Traffic

Table 3 - Reasons for not engaging with green space, and unintentional encounters.

5.3 - Focus Group and Interview Sessions

Introduction

The following chapter reports from the semi-structured interview and focus group sessions. The enquiry explored the participants engagement with green space away from their place of work or study, and considered their general perceptions of urban green spaces alongside their attitudes towards it. Then, particular consideration was given to how the participants perceived the urban green space near to their work place, whether they used it or not and for what reasons, and the amenities or provision of service they thought they would need to draw them towards it regularly.

The results from the observation sessions and the diary exercise revealed some interesting indicators used for the direction of the interview sessions. It was anticipated that talking about the themes touched upon throughout the participant diaries would expand and develop an understanding of participant needs in terms of urban green space provision within their everyday routines. Using a semi-structured approach promoted an exploration of the participants concerns, and allowed free-flowing discussion surrounding the ramifications of addressing change. This chapter is laid out to illustrate the findings of the data using thematic headings, highlighting the more pertinent details uncovered by the focus group and the interview sessions, with discussion comment attached throughout.

To instigate the discussion sessions, participants were asked some warm up questions regarding their personal definition of urban green space, and why these spaces might be considered to be important by urban planners. This opening dialogue was designed to get the interviewees to think about what green spaces meant to them, and to align their focus along the project topic.

The participants were universally comfortable with discussing their understanding of urban green space, listing examples as: city parks and gardens; tree lined streets, piazza's and boulevards; privately owned spaces; roadside verges; unadopted and unmanaged space; beer gardens. Participants presented the idea that a green space can be 'green enough' by simply having planters and wall hanging plants, and determined that it didn't necessarily need to be outdoors. Expected delivery of urban green space demanded that it provided features and functions which allow social contact, relaxation, engagement with wildlife, opportunity to exercise, and aesthetic stimulation. Participants spread the qualification of urban green space from useable to non-useable, from city centre shopping precincts to a more naturalistic "somewhere that's not been disturbed by humans."

It is within this broad description of urban green space and its desired criteria that we can see an immediate and prominent quandary for urban planners: unless an area is particularly large, it is very difficult for a space to service the needs and wants of all its potential users. The problem is exacerbated if users are confused by the provision of green space.

Urban Green Space at Home

Participants were asked to talk about how they use urban green space away from the workplace. Green spaces were frequently sought out in order to undertake many activities, with participants prepared to travel to experience and enjoy the countryside, parklands, and gardens. Common pursuits included: relaxing and socialising with friends; sports and exercise; rambling and exploration. Closer to home, participants used local green spaces to walk dogs, ride bikes, meet with friends, and to experience some fresh air. Further experience of green space was provided by interaction with personal garden areas, where participants read, relaxed, socialised, ate, and tended to the garden.

Consensus showed that generally, the sample was actively seeking to experience green space within their lives away from the work place. This could lead one to consider whether people need further access to green space during working routines: are they getting 'enough' access to green space already? Participant responses to this echoed the literature, in that workplace environments can be augmented by being green, increasing self-assessed perceptions of happiness and mental wellbeing. Furthermore, participants proposed that having the choice of using green space during working hours was preferable to not having the choice. Just because participants used green spaces away from working hours did not mean that they would be happy to relinquish access during working practices.

Urban Green Space at Work

The participants were asked to talk about the green spaces available to them at their place of work or study. The field observation exercise had identified the most prominent green spaces within a reasonable distance from the participants normal daily routine, and this list served as a guide for the discussion. The stream of conversation was left open for the participants to list and subsequently discuss the green spaces they considered to be worthy of consideration of their own accord. Follow up prompting was used to instigate the contemplation of any areas omitted from the discussion yet included on the guide list. Any areas highlighted by participants which were not on the guide list were included into the conversation. It was anticipated that this vein of questioning would uncover not only the participants knowledge of the green space available to them, but also something of their attitude towards it.

The key findings of the focus group and interview sessions are summarised below, with discussion comment added throughout. This section will highlight the principle themes relating to the participants reasons for not using green spaces, drawn from thematic analysis of the focus group and interview sessions.

There is a lack of interesting things to do

A key complaint was that urban green spaces do not necessarily offer anything for some participants to do. However, the concept that green spaces might be used as the arena to

perform an activity not specifically promoted by that space appeared to have passed several participants by. Student participants commented that green spaces should include activities, or apparatus to use, with Jeff explaining that these types of space needed *"…things to do* [to] *keep the interest*." Heidi described country parks near to her home: "…*when you go they're full of people. It's just trees and grass, probably a lake. There's nothing there to do*." There is a dichotomy within this statement: Heidi suggests that the spaces in question are full of people, yet there is nothing for them to do.

Darren was candid with his opinion of green space provision:

"*I wouldn't travel for green space. No. I would travel for something specific in a green space, but I have no interest in, well, especially the kind of parks you get around here. It's just grass and trees, and really has no interest for me at all. If there's something there that interests me, then I might go to see it, but other than that…*"

This attitude towards green space presents a problem: the secondary data used in this project suggests a widely collective impression that green space should be somewhere to relax, to unwind, and to mentally recuperate, yet some interviewees insist that at least something entertaining should be present in order to attract them. Some participants were in opposition, explaining that green spaces should be left as neutral as possible to retain a natural ambience, and that experiencing such a natural environment was in itself something to do. Furthermore, it was proposed that altering green spaces for ease of use, or for the installation of material amenities, was a necessary measure, but overzealous removal or sanitation of natural features would irrevocably eliminate the essence which makes green spaces alluring in the first place. The divisive expectations uncovered here illustrate the aforementioned difficulty for urban green space planners: spaces cannot be all things to all people.

We are conscious of how we are perceived by others

Participants highlighted that urban green space might not be considered as an environment for them due to an inherent propensity to conform with recognised social norms. This concept manifested itself in several ways.

Student participants comprehensively recognised an apparent stigma attached to utilising public green space. When asked if sitting on Peel Lawns to eat lunch, read, or socialise might be an option, Jeff exclaimed: "*Nah. It's a bit weird, that* [group laughs]. *It's...sitting on that would be too weird. It's too exposed!*" The group enthusiastically agreed, with awkward laughter mirroring sentiments of embarrassment at the thought of being seen by others while prominently sat in open, visible green space. Whatever activity might be being undertaken by participants did not enter the conversation, suggesting that performance of particular practice was less significant than location. To illustrate this, Pete briefly explained why he wouldn't consider using Peel Lawns: "…*there's people walking past!*" General nodding in agreement, or shaking of heads in defiance against the proposal, united the group in an

agreement that using lawn areas for any other use than walking over was considered to be peculiar.

The professionals amongst the participants were asked directly about their expectations of how they might be perceived by peers if they decided to take work outdoors. Each declared that both their supervisory teams and colleagues would not only be accepting of a move to take work outdoors, it would be practically encouraged as a progressive motion. Several participants highlighted the University of Salford's green policy (a programme which actively promotes awareness of the environment) as a supporting measure should one wish to work outdoors. This universal reception was summarised by Rebecca:

"*Oh, yes, I don't think anybody would…I mean, academia is not top down in that way. It's not like a normal job, do you know what I mean? People are not telling you where you do your office…your emails…and what you do with your time. We direct our own time, more or less. I don't think…no. It'd be weird if somebody mentioned it* [the use of green space in a negative context*]*."

It is perhaps unclear why the academic staff rarely, if ever, ventured outside to work in some capacity. Without any apparent hierarchal restrictions, what was stopping them? Explanations included some expected factors, such as unsuitable weather conditions and technological restraints, but more interesting was the admission that working outside was an inherently peculiar construct. Taking group sessions (such as lectures or training) outdoors posed a problem for some: what might appear to be a workable effort to offer a pleasurable experience might be unappreciated. Tara explained:

"…*if they* [students] *don't want to sit outside…it's a bit awkward. I think, because a lot of people are used to being indoors, especially in Manchester because it's quite rainy…it's a weird concept to be outside*."

Further indication that working outside might be perceived as unusual came from Alan, who was candid about his personal reaction to observing another staff member conducting work on the grass of Peel Lawns:

"*I have seen members of staff do a tutorial sitting out on the grass with students* […] *but I have thought what a tosser that person is.* […] *That's an interesting thing, that when somebody did it I perceived that they were doing it…if I can explain it…my perception would be that they were showing off. But that's an interesting observation, that my perception was, for goodness sake grow up! On reflection, maybe it's a nice thing to do, but that was my reaction to it. It may be other people's reaction to it*."

Participants reactions to observing other people using green space in an unfamiliar capacity, and the proposition that other people might respond in the same way, suggests the attachment of unconscious negative meaning or meanings. The associations of uncomfortable feelings related to practices not usually performed in green space was difficult to describe for all participants: adjectives were scarce, save for proclamations of 'weird',

'lame', and 'awkward'. More telling was the body language and facial expressions during responses, with furrowed brows, uncomfortable smiles, head shaking, and shifting in seats animating the feelings which were clearly difficult to verbally articulate. The perception that using urban green space is peculiar, strange, or even bizarre if the reason, or time, is considered to be unusual, is difficult to address. Overcoming perceptions as a barrier would need a preceding change in the attitudes of potential users.

Routines and habits: we forget that green space exists

Following on from the observation that the professional participants had free licence to work outside and yet didn't seem to, participants were asked about cogent choice – was taking work (in whatever practical capacity) into green space even a consideration? Hitchings (2010) volunteers that it is normal for workers to miss the notion of engaging with green space during work hours, either because green space time isn't perceived as something for them, or because they forget it is there. Tara recognised that overlooking the option was a reason for not engaging with green space:

"I think though, you can quite easily get stuck in your building, and not realise that you're sat down all the time. It's so much easier to sit at your desk and not really think about it. Some days you could be in the office all day if you didn't make a conscious effort to go out. The access is there, it's having the conscious effort to go and use it. And having the time, as well…"

This experience was repeated by Nathan, who mentioned that he had already acknowledged a propensity to remain at his desk for lengthy amounts of time during his working week outside of this research inquiry. Suggesting that it was effortless for him to become engrossed in desk based activities if allowed the time (the opportunity to catch up on computer based commitments a rare luxury), Nathan commented that he could easily spend eight hours seated but for his personal insistence of leaving his office for scheduled routine breaks. Moreover, Nathan recognised in himself a recharging effect derived from engaging with fresh air and green space for a short break, becoming more productive when returning to work and consequently improving his efficiency:

"…there's been days where I've been sat at my desk flagging, not being very productive, so I've actually gone out for fifteen minutes and walked around, come back to my desk, and so losing that fifteen minutes…I didn't have to sit there for eight hours working! I could have sat there for six hours [because] *I've got a bit of a recharge."*

When questioned about her attitude to taking work outside, Jen acknowledged that she didn't, noting that, *"People fall into habits! We fall into patterns…we have an idea of what 'work' looks like."* Jen explained that she felt her daily routine was automatic, following norms that had been established and maintained by others since before her arrival at her current job. This suggests that routine and conformity can control our actions without us realising it,

and illustrates Shove et al.'s (2014) assertions that repeated performance of practices are not only necessary to maintain them, but can also become the status quo, with new performers instinctively, possibly mechanically, continuing the traditional circuits they enter into. Jen highlighted the example that her interview session could have been conducted outside with suitable recording equipment, yet we had naturally opted to sit at her desk in her office.

If urban green spaces are considered as a regular forum or place appropriate and suitable for use as a work space, the concept needs to be recognised and contemplated as a viable option, and acted upon whenever a practical opportunity arises.

We are unaware of the existence of available green space

Asking the participants to describe the green spaces available to them revealed that some were not entirely aware of their green surroundings, despite the longevity of their time spent frequenting the general areas. When prompted to list the nearby green space, participants were asked to mentally 'walk' through the study area, explaining the presence of green spaces from recollection. Understandably, the recent development of the Peel Park site and the Horlock Lawn area meant that participants were not able to wholly describe and discuss their recent experiences here.

The Meadows seemed to be the most eluded space by the participants: when The Meadows was raised during the focus group session, some had experienced it, most had heard of it but not visited, and others were not aware of it as an available space. As recent arrivals to the University, both Andrea and Nathan (independently from each other) actively went to search around their new environment. They had both found The Meadows site as a result of curious exploration, happy to follow the discrete signposts directing them to unknown pastures. Pete knew of The Meadows from a data collecting exercise located within, but otherwise had had no calling to visit, his suggestion that the idea had never really crossed his mind. This admission rang true with other participants: there did not appear to be an immediate reason to visit The Meadows, therefore visiting had never registered as an option for most.

Most study areas were mentioned by all participants, with the notable exception being the Car Park garden near to Peel building. This area was only identified twice, despite each University of Salford participant walking through or by it on an extremely regular occasion. Indeed, whenever the garden was posited for conversation, participants recognised and accepted its inclusion immediately, with expressions which suggested it went without saying. Only one participant had ever used it, perhaps indicative of how places can fail, despite seemingly having some appropriate amenity provision designed to hold people (benches, ornamental gardens, waste bins, Wifi). This raises the question of how spaces become considered as 'ours' to use, and whether we think they are available to us.

Health and pollution issues

Participants commented upon a reluctance to settle in green spaces which held the potential to expose them to deleterious airborne pollutant. Irritants mentioned included dust from construction, traffic pollution, and most frustratingly for some, second-hand cigarette smoke.

By its nature, construction work is a temporary localised inconvenience, and is legally obliged under the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations, 2002, to manage activities which may expose people to construction dust (Health and Safety Executive, 2013). Risk of exposure can be controlled by reducing the amount of created dust through extraction, the choice of low disturbance tools, and suitable material selection, but escaping dust particles are generally unavoidable. Best practice advice suggests that to further reduce risk of exposure, work should be enclosed using sheeting or temporary screens to capture escaping dust (Health and Safety Executive, 2013). This measure is exemplified by the ongoing development at the Alliance Business School site (figure 18) and also near to the Peel Carpark Garden site, however, residual dust cover was apparent and visible on the surrounding ground surfaces during the site visits, and reported as a noticeable nuisance by participants. This suggests that construction dust control measures are not 'watertight', and any escaping pollutants can be enough to dissuade people from lingering nearby.

Traffic pollution from main roads was mentioned by participants from both Universities. The A6 running by Peel Lawns was cited as a principle reason for not using this space, with Oxford Road affecting the decision to use two of the seemingly available Manchester city centre green spaces. Traffic calming measures designed to reduce the speed of flow are utilised by both roads, yet slow moving, large vehicles were perceived to be particularly invasive, with disruptive noise pollution adding to their offensive impact. The speed restriction measures were thought to be successful with regards to road safety, but the nuisance effects lingered for longer than was comfortable for some participants. A refusal to spend time in Peel Lawns was punctuated by Darren:

"…you wouldn't want to sit there for fear of your lungs...there's that much pollution."

This declaration was perhaps somewhat surprising considering Darren's open position as a confessed heavy smoker. It suggests perhaps that the volume and frequency of air pollution near to main roads is determined to be too high a risk to health to endure, even for those with relaxed attitudes towards genuine personal health preservation.

With smoking inside public places legally prohibited by the Health Act 2006 (Department of Health, 2006), people who wish to smoke must do so outdoors. For several non-smoking participants, sharing space with smokers was inconceivable. The idea of spending any length of time sat down in communal green space (Peel Lawns in particular) was not attractive to Rebecca:

"My only concern with that is the sneaky little smokers get in everywhere and they end up ruining it for the rest of us."

Urban green spaces may need to be perceived as healthy options before people are to be enticed into using them routinely. Evidence of good quality air may need to be experienced personally before urban green space sites near to roads are regularly accessed. Visible remediation of affected areas could help to change personal opinions of whether a green space is healthy, suitable, and therefore attractive.

Environmental distractions

Participants acknowledged that being out in the open invites the potential for unwanted distractions. Participants discussed possible unwanted environmental disruptions such as: the weather (more on this later); flying insects; noise; pollen; bright sunlight; malodourous smells; other people. These disturbances were deemed to be mildly irritating when relaxing or socialising, more so if one was contemplating a work-orientated activity where concentration was needed.

Noise was mentioned at the more disturbing end of distractive influences, with participants unlikely to remain in an audibly raucous environment for long. Jen refrained from using the immediate and available green space at Waterloo Place specifically due to its proximity to the constant noise from Oxford Road, *"…it's so busy: busses, sirens, and at the moment roadworks…so it's not very pleasant to sit out in the green spaces that face on to Oxford Road."* Others noted the noise from other green space users as enough to distract them from academic pursuits, particularly reading, the slightest sound as likely to disturb as the most invasive noise. Noise in this context did not necessarily mean sound as a typical negative stimulus, such as that from heavy traffic, sirens, alarms, or construction: overhearing a conversation might create a voyeuristic distraction; familiar or interesting music might divert attention; ice-cream van chimes might destroy a particular train of thought.

Open spaces held an imposing overtone for some participants, with several mentions of unwanted exposure to and from other people. This follows on from the discussion regarding the potential use of Peel Lawns and the reluctance of participants to engage with it. Heidi illustrated this notion, expressing discomfort when faced with the expanse of Horlock Lawns, *"…it's so open, that grass, there's no...you don't feel enclosed. You can see everyone, you can see everyone doing their normal business and when I go somewhere that's like a green space, I like it to be quiet."*

Pete had previously discussed his preference for quieter green spaces, particularly those left to natural succession, and had considered the idea of exposure to others in advance:

"I think that an exposed space...there's a theory called the 'Prospect and Refuge Theory', where people like to 'see' [attractive land cover]*, but they don't like to be 'seen'. But if they're too enclosed, people don't like it, and if they're too exposed, they don't like it. They like a balance between prospect...and refuge, so they can feel more comfortable in a green space. That green space out there* [Peel Lawns] *is just too exposed."*

Appleton's (1975) Prospect-Refuge theory is indeed an attempt to describe a human inherent desire to seek out habitats from where threats or opportunities can be observed without being seen by said threats or competition, and Pete's analogous insight might partly explain why some participants were reluctant to utilise certain green spaces.

Participants generally felt that not much could be done to reduce the likelihood of experiencing distractions in urban green spaces: interference from environmentally present influences quite literally coming with the territory. It was also ascertained that one person's distraction is another's use of urban green space: it is very difficult for a space to host different groups of people with different needs and practices, possibly contradictory or conflicting each other.

Perceptions of fear or poor safety

Hitchings (2010) emphasises that some green spaces may harbour connotations of high risk from the maintenance of localised opinion and the re-telling of negative stories. These spaces may hold a stigma of inadequate safety, leaving them as an unappealing destination to potential new visitors, and fortifying already negative perceptions for familiar others. This appeared to ring true with some of the participants, with Peel Park highlighted for its long standing local reputation as an unsafe environment. None of the participants volunteered any personal experiences of insalubrious behaviour within the park, but student participants associated the space with the potential for physical assault and theft, and agreed upon a common knowledge of the space as a refuge to partake in alcohol and drug use. This suggests that negative connotations associated with particular green spaces do not need to be directly experienced to influence the decision to visit. Pete volunteered:

"You might never have been there [a particular green space] *before, but you've heard about them, and so you perceive it as a place you wouldn't go."*

The removal of trees to reduce the thick boundary canopy had been noticed by the group, with comments that the whole space now looked more approachable. Improvements to sight lines near to The Meadow had also been noticed, with a recent thinning of the border tree line opening up external views into (and internal views from) the space from the nearby housing estate, parts of Peel Park, and the Maxwell Building within the adjacent University grounds. Tara suggested that she had been recently using The Meadow as part of her running route, something she would not have considered while the space had restrictive views because of the potential to be out of sight in a mainly unpopulated place:

"…they've done it all up. Again, that's another space I didn't use to use until they'd sorted that stretch by the river. Now you can see it, because you couldn't see it. And the housing estate [is also in view]*…you feel a lot safer because there's more people about. We go running round there."*

Participants were perturbed by green spaces if they were considered to be unattractive in terms of urban decay: areas considered to be 'run down' were deemed to be unsafe in that they were likely to harbour insalubrious activity. Vandalism, litter, dog waste, discarded cigarette stubs, abandoned shopping trolleys, and other anthropogenic disorders were mentioned as factors which create uninviting space, unattractive enough to prevent participants from spending time in such an area. Plants and grasses left to natural succession by maintenance teams were deemed to be quite acceptable, even attractive to some, but uncontrolled sanitation of human made littering added to an impression of unpleasantness, leading to avoidance.

Perceptions of the possibility of dangerous or insalubrious activity was particularly powerful for some of the participants, with an intuitive avoidance of potential hotspots proving difficult to explain. A contradiction was found if participants were very familiar with green spaces of poor reputation: both Lorna and Jeff had described green spaces near to their homes as known trouble spots for drugs, vandalism, and youth driven anti-social behaviour, but their familiarity with them over a lifetime of local residence had instilled a level of confidence and security. These spaces were theirs, and they were safe: the cliché of not expecting anything bad to happen right outside their door went unnoticed. Laura explained:

"[Near me]*...there are dogs, groups of teenagers - it's been known for drug dealers. It's got a bad reputation, but it's a really nice big green space. There's a lot of families around us, but there's a road that goes along it and three or four bus stops and they've all been smashed, and there's vandalism in the park* […]*. I've lived there all my life, so I know it, and I've never really had any major issues. It's not so bad."*

Jeff compounded this subconscious subduing of risk perception fashioned by familiarity:

"Near me, there's no bins, dog shit everywhere [laughs]*, broken glass, we have like a crack den on one side - serious. I'm not even joking here. But it still gets used by everyone."*

Both accounts describe areas known for dangerous and illegal activity, yet both participants would not avoid these spaces. During this conversation most of the group agreed and expressed that they had similar relationships with spaces like this near to them. However, when the factor of light and darkness was considered, feelings of personal security were more pronounced. Lorna volunteered that she simply would not use the park near to her after dark, although the same threats were possibly present during daylight hours. When pressed, the group moved towards a reluctance to use their familiar but dubious local green spaces after dark, but could not explain why it was a more fearful proposition. Darren further implied that unsolicited exposure to sexual activities became more likely once light fell:

"…I know, but…it's dark. Parks are secluded spaces at night, and I wonder why anyone would go there at night. [Thinks for a moment]*…I mean, I'm gay, and I know what goes on in parks, and I would not go there at night. It's not a good place. "*

One might substitute Darren's use of the description 'at night' for 'after dark', and the same perceptions of fear and poor safety can be applied to several of the more secluded research areas. Rebecca suggested individually that she felt perfectly safe walking through the core campus area after dark, conscious of the University's security personnel presence, good lighting, and populated concourses, yet the overall consensus was that the fringe areas (Peel Park, The Meadow) were to be avoided.

Participants found their perceptions of fear and safety difficult to explain, however, they collectively and intuitively understood what felt right and what felt wrong. When asked if there might be an occasion when green spaces should be avoided, Nathan insinuated:

"You know, winter, night time. Green space suddenly doesn't appear as enticing as it might 'coz you think, oh, do I want to walk through there? There's that."

Nathan's answer illustrates an instinctual approach to personal safety when considering green space after dark, without actually stating specific causes for concern. It is possible that the unknown is fearful in itself, while we inherently understand that underpopulated, annexed spaces may host antisocial or insalubrious characters or activities once darkness falls.

The data suggested that just because an area has a known reputation for trouble does not mean that people will not use them: moreover, if we are familiar with the space in question, we are likely to dismiss the risk factor. However, unfamiliar places which look maintained, sanitised, attractive, secure, overlooked and populated, have more of a chance of drawing people into them. The participants explained their need to feel safe in their surroundings, opting mostly to avoid spaces they had become suspicious of from recalling hearsay.

Poor accessibility

Accessibility issues were proposed as a reason for not entering green spaces, with both visually suggestive barriers and purpose built physical blockades cited as deterrents.

Participants highlighted that access to green space needed to be visually clear to them, otherwise they were generally unlikely to capitalise upon any thoughts of engagement. For example, The Meadows area had been spotted by some participants from the adjacent main road and from University buildings, but it was thought to be practically inaccessible due to the lack of a visibly obvious entrance: the treelined border apparently impenetrable; the River Irwell seemingly impassable. Furthermore, some of those who understood that entry was gained by crossing the River Irwell via a footbridge situated in Peel Park were discouraged by the distance of the access point, which was geographically further away from them than The Meadows area itself. This suggests that either exploring to find an access point, or travelling to gain access, was just too much of an effort for some, perhaps understandable if time was short.

Restrictions on practical accessibility was noted both as a physical and an inferential barrier, with deliberate measures to reduce or prohibit access considered to be excessively successful by the participants. For example, the ongoing redevelopment of Peel Park had seen parts cordoned off using temporary wire fencing and plywood screening, and although most of the park had been left accessible, some participants indicated that they had not considered the park to be open to visitors as usual. Whether these participants would have visited the park otherwise is debatable, but the impression of obstruction created by the barriers was deemed to be discouraging. Similarly, the temporary pre-fabricated bookshop situated on Bridgeford Street Lawns had a distancing effect on Jen, who had declared the space as sterile, confusing, and purposeless, without any agreement that one might now use the space for any reason. This was interesting, in that the research's site visit declared the space to be almost pristine in its appearance, now with the suggestion that this was due to lack of use rather than intensive maintenance.

The data infers that the temporary cordoning of construction or development work, including security fencing and guiding boundaries, can unintentionally be as restrictive as purpose built barriers such as stone walls, hedgerows, or trellis. Furthermore, the position and continuousness of boundaries can create the impression of blockade rather than border, leaving places dismissed as a veritable accessible area.

Poor quality or insufficient amenities

The participants highlighted a lack of facilities in their immediate green space, leaving them with featureless prospects and consequently little reason to visit. Common complaints related to sparse seating opportunities, few tables, insufficient litterbins, and inadequate shelter. Whether or not these grievances are causes for concern is a contestable point; other participants had already expressed a preference for green spaces left to natural succession, with concession for uncluttered topographical management. It was acknowledged that amenities which would need regular maintenance or staffing would not always be present, nor even necessary, in urban green space, for example: toilet blocks; water fountains; electrical power points; refreshment or retail. However, the general feeling between participants indicated that provision of basic amenities would make green space at least easier to visit, and more comfortable to remain in.

A lack of seating provision was noted across the sample participants experiences of urban green space close to their daily routine, and absence of this particular item of furniture was positioned as more important than the absence of other objects. Although Nathan astutely acknowledged that, *"…we've all got something to sit on!"*, if an area was known not to have anything tangible to sit on positioned in advance, that area was unlikely to be considered worthy of visiting. Responses indicated that it was highly unlikely that participants would visit urban green space if they had to stand around while they were there. For example, and returning to the idea of eating lunch outdoors, Rebecca lamented the blank scape of Peel

Lawns as a wasted opportunity for her. Reflecting that she consciously did not visit green space for lunch as often as she might like to, Rebecca suggested that Peel Lawns would be ideal if not for the absence of organised seating: *"But you'd feel lame* [eating in Peel Lawns]*, 'coz usually I just go on my own, and then you are kind of just sat on this statue eating your lunch."*

Jen further remarked that the lack of seating in some green areas ruined any genuine opportunity to socialise, an express condition if she was to take her lunch break outside. Conversely, Jen noted a local success at Bridgeford Street, adjacent to her office building, where an organised event created the opportunity to gather, eat, and sit:

"They do a food fair on a Tuesday, and that's nice 'coz it's full of people and all the benches are taken with people sitting outside. You do see people on those benches quite often, especially at lunchtime."

However, material choice and ergonomic design of seating furniture was also an important factor when deciding to remain in green space. The concrete block design adjacent to Horlock Lawns was deemed to be physically cold and emotionally uninviting, while the wooden forms intended to be in keeping with the surrounding environment at The Meadows were described in terms of cleanliness, ultimately considered to be dirty, slimy, dusty, and home to irksome insects and their associated larvae or eggs. The steel benches found throughout the University of Salford campus were thought to be sterile and uncomfortable. Unfortunately, this particular avenue of conversation did not reveal precisely what type of seating material would be most congenial to the user: it was understood that whatever seating was provided would need to be weather and user resistant to a maintainable degree, but no agreeable consensus presented itself.

Participants also exclaimed that if amenities were present in their chosen green spaces, they should not be broken, poorly maintained, or overflowing. Poor quality provision appeared to be potentially more uninviting than no facilities at all, adding to any negative perceptions of whether a space was considered to be a healthy, safe, or secure environment. Participants expressed little tolerance for overflowing litter, particularly from dog waste bins, a factor offensive enough to ensure a swift exit and low probability of returning to the area.

Work or study obligations

Participants were keen to discuss the possibilities of taking parts of their work outdoors in order to increase exposure to urban green space, and were unanimously convivial to exploring the idea in practical terms. Although initially concerned with the barriers, the focus group developed conversation to freely highlight the difficulties in working outdoors and autonomously offered solutions as part of the discussion. The participants involved in this particular study shared similar protocols in their work or study models: whether individuals were students or academic staff, all used computers to deliver some output, all were

obligated to read and write electronically, and all were involved in lectures and group exercises in some way, meaning discussions were sympathetic across the sample.

Student participants mentioned times when work or study naturally took them out into green space, including field work opportunities for personal projects and practical field work skills sessions. Opportunities to use green space as a place to study were otherwise ignored, yet the idea of taking lectures outdoors was met with good faith: reasons given for not doing so surrounded the need for electronic presentation slides, seating, and complimentary ambience. Occasionally, however, participants had experienced and enjoyed outdoor lectures, but these events seemed to be sporadic and infrequent. Armina recalled the informal and unplanned nature of this:

"I think it depends on the professor as well. In my undergrad, with one or two lecturers we actually went outside and they stopped using their power point and gave a lecture as a person, and it was a lot more interactive, and we just went to a quiet place on campus. And it was very nice! We didn't even need a projector."

Participants claimed that studying outside was a difficult practice, with barriers such as: wind and weather disruption; environmental distractions; lack of seating; sun glare. However, further discussion deduced that light reading, planning, and meetings would be possible if the conditions were amenable, though interruptions such as noise, and even the simple presence of others were considered to be disruptive enough to break concentration. Daylight was offered as a reason not to use laptops or tablets for reading outdoors because of the glare, yet it was conceded that the mainstream and ubiquitous use of mobile phones demonstrated that electronic reading outdoors was entirely plausible. Indeed, the timely success of mobile applications such as Pokemon Go, a mobile phone based treasure hunt game needing constant attention to an electronic screen, illustrated that daylight did not necessarily prove to be a barrier in this way.

The academic staff participants declared activities such as group teaching, marking, software based work, and answering emails to be indoor jobs: the concentration needed to attend to such important aspects of their work was high, and the chance of being disturbed by outside factors meant that taking it outdoors was not practical. One common factor between this group was the large amount of time needed to attend to administrative commitments away from the core job roles of researching and teaching. As previously indicated, many of these participants volunteered that they would eat lunch outside, but they just didn't put this into action. When pressed further, the working academic staff reported that they possibly couldn't: lunch times were usually spent at their office desk in order to catch up on emails, conduct short meetings, or to generally continue with outstanding desk work. Rebecca explained:

"…it has occurred to me that sometimes I should get out there and have my lunch in Peel Park. But even me - aware of the benefits - I still don't do that. So probably, the main constraint is time [management]. *I don't really work nine 'til five."*

Furthermore, Nathan explained, "…*most of my work* [away from group teaching] *is computer based."* This seemed to be the shared position for the academic staff participants. Although it was agreed that using a laptop computer would be possible for some tasks, the computing power of a desktop PC was necessary for more sophisticated or large scale operations (for example, returning feedback from marking or writing reports). Each of these participants displayed frustration at the amount of time they apportioned to filtering, reading, and replying to emails, time they felt was often misspent if not wasted. However, even this task was difficult to imagine being relocated to an outdoor laptop: some replies might need to relate to information not accessible via laptop.

Weather

Inclement and uncomfortable weather was presented as a barrier to remaining in green space for any length of time. Superficially, this may appear to be an obvious observation, but the degree of uncomfortableness needed for a participant to deem the conditions to be unsuitable was interesting. Participants were referred to their diary entries: the diary week was particularly warm and dry, with seemingly idyllic conditions for venturing outside, yet the slightest hint of trying weather was enough to discourage some. These changes in weather conditions did not necessarily involve precipitation, with cool breezes and even the sun disappearing behind cloud cover reason enough to retreat indoors. This is particularly provoking in light of the participants overall penchant for outdoor activities: almost all had revealed that their wardrobe contained plenty of clothing suitable for intemperate conditions, yet none could confidently say that they dressed for work or study in preparation for changes in weather activity. Indeed, for some, the idea of spending time outside was not a consideration (as previously inferred), meaning weather resistance amounted to a small umbrella, or a light jacket left in the car, used to dart from bus or car park if it was raining.

It was felt that cold, typically wintery conditions presented a setting which would not be appropriate to spend considerable time in during the working day, and therefore did not warrant detailed discussion within the study. Spats of light showers, gloom, and overcast conditions were generally considered to be uninviting, but summery weather was equally as uncomfortable for some. Fair skinned participants noted that direct sunlight held the precarious potential for sunburn, and sun cream was deemed to be particularly uncomfortable throughout the rest of the indoor working day, meaning that direct sunlight was to be avoided. Bright sunshine was painful for those with sensitive vision. Alan, a long time photophobic sufferer, volunteered that bright light was too intensive to sit out in for extended periods of time.

Direct heat, and the resulting body sweat, posed problems for those preferring to remain at a cooler temperature. Furthermore, sustained hot weather left seating near to waste bins unappealing for some participants; the smells of warm refuse and the presence of flying

insects enough to deter most from using the provided green space facilities, particularly if overflowing or in a state of disrepair.

The data derived from the interview sessions displayed a wide range of opinion on the ideal weather conditions for the UK might be. One participant's 'too hot' was another's 'freezing', illustrated by the focus group members attire, where some wore t-shirts and others left their coats on. The contrast in opinion suggests that individual preferences are key to how one might prepare for changing weather conditions. Additionally, whatever outdoor activity is being undertaken influences our choice of apparel. Finally, a dichotomy in how the individual might approach weather conditions depending upon their intended practice suggests that sometimes, we just don't fancy it. Alan explained:

"…I wouldn't want to sit out and work if it's gloomy, but I will sit outside in the gloom and have my lunch!"

Comment

The interview sessions offered a candid insight into how we perceive and use the green spaces available to us, of whether we consciously engage with them, and of what we might need to include or improve in order to make these spaces more attractive to us. However, it was difficult to ascertain what participants specifically wanted from their green spaces, and to uncover exactly how they felt about their available sites. Some of the key returned data was contradictory, and not just from opposing individual viewpoints. Individuals were found to offer conflicting information. This inconsistency has not been dismissed as incongruous, rather it has been taken to be illustrative of the relationship we have with urban green spaces, where our opinions appear to be driven by context, personal perception, practical availability and accessibility, and intended practice.

The difficulty in providing urban green spaces for all people can be seen in the data, where duality can be found throughout the diary entries and the interview sessions. One person's 'too exposed' is another's idea of safety, and vice versa. One may prefer urban green space left to natural succession, another may favour sanitisation – a more *urbanised* green space. The presence of others can be both perceived as attractive and a nuisance, depending upon one's discernment or intention at a given time. A specific example of this: All Saints Park was regularly busy with people during the research, yet Jen, who had expressed a wish to eat lunch outside while the weather was hot, was reluctant to use this space. Although clearly attractive for many people, the success of the space conversely acted as a deterrent for Jen, with park users *"…condensed!...a bit jammed together…"*, creating a crowded and busy social area, potentially difficult to penetrate and perhaps uncomfortable if a space to locate was found. However, Jen had also exclaimed that she hadn't sat outside for lunch all week because there were no opportunities to socialise.

Participants exhibited definite feelings about certain aspects of green space, but conceivably sometimes without genuine predetermined consideration, indicated by a willing propensity to digest and cordially agree with the thoughts of others. The focus group was particularly helpful in demonstrating that differences in opinion relating to urban green space do not conveniently compartmentalise into demarked columns of 'right' and 'wrong', rather the conversation is both broader and more intricate at the same time. This is shown by Alan's position of reluctance to experience gloom while performing one practice, yet happy enough to do so during another, indicating that it might be impossible to predict (and therefore provide for) how potential users will behave around and within urban green space. Individual preferences and inherent perceptions therefore might not be a manageable factor when considering urban green space design.

Discussion also revealed that although the participants felt that they wanted better availability of more green space closer to their daily routines, they admittedly did not wholly engage with the spaces already accessible to them. It is understood that the sample may have been biased in that the participants were voluntarily contributing to this study, and arrived from an interest relating to urban green spaces. They would almost certainly have been aware of the benefits of engaging with green spaces, and would have recognised their behavioural patterns as part of the diary exercise. Perhaps expectedly then, missed opportunities to engage with green space were mildly lamented, with participants body language and vocal patterns suggesting that most were reflectively conscious of not using green space as much as they felt they might, or could. This is sympathetic to Hitchings (2010) remark that, without any sense of negativity or neglect, we are simply prone to forgetting that the use of urban green space is even an option for us.

The research was interested in reasons why participants did not engage with urban green space near to their daily routines, and thematic analysis of the interview sessions exposed some overarching preventions and barriers. These barriers have been highlighted in detail above, and a summary of these main findings is included below:

- There is a lack of interesting things to do in these spaces.
- We are conscious of how we are perceived by others when we are in these spaces.
- Because of our habitual routines, we forget that green space exists.
- We are unaware of the existence of available green space.
- We do not wish to encounter health and pollution issues.
- There are environmental distractions.
- We are fearful of these spaces, or consider them to have poor safety.
- Accessibility is poor.
- The available amenities are unsuitable or of poor quality.
- Work or study obligations mean we cannot leave our buildings.
- Unsuitable weather conditions deter us.

5.4 - Bringing practice theory insights into planning and policy

Elements of Practices Performed in Urban Green Space

This section details and examines the practices and activities which could be performed or undertaken by participants in their urban green spaces throughout the regular working day, as revealed by thematic analysis of the primary data, in order to establish recommendations for improvement via mitigation or intervention. NVivo qualitative analysis software was used to code and group the data, with emergent themes captured and cross referenced to provide the primary actions of participants. This list is not exhaustive, nor can it comprehensively capture the entirety of possible actions that could be undertaken in urban green spaces, but the predominant practices which were revealed by analysis are investigated.

Using practice theory as a lens to examine practices allows the identification of the individual constituent elements (Cass and Falconbridge, 2016). This can assist with further nuanced exploration: the micro and macro component parts of practices can be identified and attended to with intrinsic precision (Shove et al., 2012). Table 4 summarises the key practices uncovered by analysis of the data, and offers advice on where attention should be focused relating to the particular associated materials, meanings, and competences. To recap, materials can be said to be the tangible things that we use during a practice, meanings are the related symbolic, ideological, or aspirational societal attachments, and competences are the skills and knowledge needed to perform a practice.

Practice	Materials	Meanings	Competences
Work and Study	– Seating – Tables – Power – Computers – Wifi – Shade, shelter, screening	– Conscious of the negative perceptions of others – Realisation and agreement that green space is a useable location – Courtesy of others – Feelings of peculiar behaviour	– Technological proficiency – Preparation for outdoor environment – Preparation of workload

Walking	– Appropriate clothing – Pathways – Lighting – Signposts, information, maps	– Discovery and exploration – Mental recuperation – Physical limbering – Commuting or transition	– Navigation – Time management – Choice of clothing
Relaxing	– Seating – Compliant environment (tranquillity; absence of pollution) – Safety	– Mental restoration and palliative effect – Solace – Time away from work	– Psychological detachment (or 'switching off') – Psychological engagement (or 'switching back on')
Socialising	– Seating – Shelter – Suitable environment	– Social bonding – Rest, relaxation, recuperation – Information gathering	– Meeting arrangements – Time management
Eating/Drinking	– Seating – Tables – Waste bins – Clean location – Food retail opportunity	– Sustenance and replenishment – Time away from work – Meetings	– Preparation of food/drink – Purchase of food/drink – Consumption of food/drink
Smoking	– Shelter – Ash trays and waste bins	– Habitual routine compliance – Social bonding – Physical addiction appeasement – Ingestion of stimulant	– How to smoke – How to dispose of spent waste safely
Exercise	– Designated pathways – Appropriate ground surfaces (e.g. stable ground for running)	– Physical stimulation or growth – Weight loss – Fitness regime – Social opportunity	– Use of correct clothing – Competent/safe use of apparatus – Time management

	– Signposts, maps – Washroom facilities – Correct clothing	– Mental restoration	– Returning in acceptable state of personal hygiene
Events	– Appropriate ground surfaces – Stalls – Music amplification – Pedestrianisation	– Social/community – Financial – Promotional	– Advertising and marketing – Event organisation and coordination

Table 4 - Primary practices in urban green space during the working day, separated into constituent elements.

Cass and Falconbridge (2016) emphasise that practices could be reshaped to encourage performers to engage, however, all the component elements of the practice must be addressed. By way of example, data from this project suggests that although the material element of the Peel carpark garden site appeared to have been provided (pathways, litter bins, seating, well maintained flora and fauna, and so on), it was still not seen as a desirable location by the participants. Without the participants able to attach meaning to this space, that is, investing in the idea that it might be used by them *for something*, the design and upkeep alone had failed to entice users. Petersen (2013) acknowledges that people need space for time-out, somewhere to isolate us from whatever we need a break from, and the Peel carpark garden seemed to provide this service, at least in a tangible sense. By making changes to absent practice elements, under-utilised green spaces might become considered as available locations for the potential user.

Analysis of the primary data provided two useful packets of information: awareness and understanding of the reasons why participants might not engage with urban green space under their normal working routines; fundamental insight into the elemental construction of likely practices participants might perform in urban green space. By mapping and cross referencing this information, pertinent points were able to be emphasised, indicating where attention for mitigation or intervention actions might be focussed to improve routine engagement with urban green spaces.

The following section highlights key areas for attention, and discusses potential remedial solutions. Shove et al. (2012) insist that in order to alter conventions significantly, elements of practice need to be reconfigured, inferring that fundamental transformation is to be anticipated. This suggests that no proposal for improvement should be left off the table. That

spirit is adhered to here, where considerations range from quick wins to radical changes, unbounded by financial or operational constriction. Beginning with antidotes to the barriers which prevent routine engagement with urban green spaces uncovered by this research, the discussion will offer counteractive advice, before summarising with an agenda for change in urban green space practices in illustrative form.

There is a lack of interesting things to do in urban green spaces.

Participants expressed the need for 'something to do'. While it is acknowledged that green spaces cannot be all things to all people, and some people may prefer a more natural, serene space, temporary attractions could provide a reason for others to visit more often than is usual for them without permanently excluding existing users. If the objective is to encourage people who do not engage with urban green space to do so more frequently, organised events marketed towards infrequent or abstaining users may offer an interest. 'Things to do' might be a simple as the provision of benches, or as sophisticated as music events or live street theatre. They might range from leisure activities such as yoga and fitness classes, arts, crafts, and discussion groups, through to street food or market stalls. Using green spaces in a temporary manner allows different events or activities to be held at different times, maintaining diversity and offering choice, including the option of no organised action.

Furthermore, spaces which have failed to attract a population might be overhauled to offer an entirely different experience. Revitalising or renovating space to encourage users is more profitable than leaving it unattended (Krekel et al., 2016), and provision of a different service or amenity could breathe life into underused spaces. Inclusion of walking and cycle paths, permanent seating and benches, small scale sports and exercise facilities, or any tangible feature deemed to be interesting to a new user might encourage footfall.

We are conscious of how we are perceived by others when we are in these spaces.

It may be that the perceived embarrassment of using urban green spaces is individually subjective, and cultural norms appear to strongly influence this paradigm. However, if some groups feel uncomfortable using these spaces because it is perceived to be unusual, then engaging with green space must be repositioned to make it appear and feel usual, ordinary, and unremarkable. Mehta (2013) supports the idea that people attract people, and to entice more users space must first have occupants. People can be initially attracted by advertised events or by attractive design, then public congregation can be controlled by design (seating, food opportunities, music, and so forth) and eventually, by inherent atmospheric vibrancy.

Baur et al. (2013) further discuss homophily and the difficulty of attracting a peer influenced group into urban green space if their collective identity perceives it as inaccessible. Specifically targeted events and associated direct marketing can help to engage identifiable community groups (Heritage Lottery Fund, 2016), but may be more difficult to impact upon a wide ranging group such as the participant students particular to this study. The participants were demographically diverse in terms of gender, age, sexuality, nationality, health and fitness, and

economic position, without looking into personal interests and practices. Wright-Wendel (2012) insists that if the use of green space is to be normalised, it is crucial that cultural diversity is represented and catered for.

Relating to University grounds, green spaces might be developed to host both staff and students together. The introduction of seating, desks, privacy screening, and suitable technology which enable outdoor classes, meetings, or events, coupled with scheduled use over a short period of time could change perceptions and attitudes. A three year period would eventually introduce new students into an established practice, where people are already situated in green space, reducing any notion of inaccessibility, social uncomfortableness, or unusual connotation.

Because of our habitual routines, we forget that green space exists.

Hitchings (2010; 2013) research exposed the dominance of preoccupation in city workers distant relationship with urban green space, a familiar characteristic to the participants involved in this study. Again, advertising and organised events can promote the idea of using green space. Outdoor facilities can make green space use an easier physical and practical option, giving weight to consideration of its use.

The diary exercise section of this research prompted users to think about their engagement with urban green space directly. Training people to think about their own movements might be incorporated into some form of auditing, where people are challenged to question whether they are experiencing 'enough' green. The success of the ten thousand steps campaign illustrates that if a practice which benefits people captures the public imagination, then new practices can permeate our habitual routines on a large scale.

We are unaware of the existence of available green space.

Again, prevalent advertising, signposting, and organised events can help to make sure urban green spaces are discovered by potential users. This research discussed The Meadows, a large green space close to the University of Salford. The site visit found little in the way of signposting towards its existence, and due to it being visibly obscured from the main campus, it is perhaps not surprising to learn that it was unknown to some of the participants. New potential users (both students and staff) might be introduced to locally available green space by incorporating it into an orientation session, and by repeated visits using organised events.

We do not wish to encounter health and pollution issues.

Deleterious environmental conditions should be removed or alleviated to help encourage users into urban green space. Traffic pollution is a major issue in the urban environment (Johnson et al., 2013) and can be mitigated in many ways, with pedestrianisation, the banning of diesel engines, and vehicle zoning among the more extreme measures. Where radical action is not possible, screening can help to reduce the impact from traffic or construction pollution. Once assessed as a suitably clean space, advertising the fact could help to attract

users. Prominent air monitoring stations and displayed results could help to reinforce credibility.

There are environmental distractions.

The open accessibility of university grounds makes it very difficult to sanitise against environmental distraction, particularly from noise. Quiet zones and purpose built study spaces may help to ingrain social courtesy from those in proximity, but would be problematic to police. Again, orientation programmes could explain the idea and communicate the required behaviours. Noise mitigation techniques such as screening, pedestrianisation, or advertising could help to reduce impact.

Distractions may be caused by other factors considered to be irritating. Participants mentioned litter, dog fouling, unpleasant smells, and insects, though an exhaustive list of potential distractions could not possibly be attempted here. Good grounds maintenance could increase the impression of sanitisation from disagreeable distractions, with refuse free spaces more appealing than unmanaged spaces (Krekel et al., 2016).

We are fearful of these spaces, or consider them to have poor safety.

Spaces with reputations for poor safety can be addressed by opening up visibility and populating the area. Trees and dense undergrowth are fundamental components of urban green space, of course, but can conversely act as an impenetrable visual partition, enclosing areas from the relative safety afforded by public view. Strategically removing some can improve sightlines and encourage access. Cleaning and maintaining areas of poor quality can instil the impression of a safer environment, while introducing a new population to the area can dissuade unsavoury activity, For example, one participant noted the success of the children's play area in Peel Park, expressing that the presence of children and families had created an entirely different atmosphere.

Furthermore, creating public spaces for people to use could help to create a population, and subsequently improve perceptions of isolation and fear of crime. The inclusion of lighting, seating, benches, CCTV, beat security, events and activities, play areas, sport and exercise facilities, and maintained gardens, could attract and hold visitors, naturally removing some anti-social behaviours more likely to happen in quieter locations.

Accessibility is poor.

Making sure that green spaces are easy to access would naturally improve footfall. Measures might include the removal of impenetrable screening caused by hedgerows, fencing, or undergrowth, an increase in suitable pathways, or the inclusion of strategically positioned bridges. Signposting access points could help to encourage users, while an alternative to, or the removal of steps, would grant easier access for prams, wheelchairs, and bicycles.

The available amenities are unsuitable or of poor quality.

Appropriate facilities which support the intentions for the green space should be included and maintained. Research participants highlighted good quality seating as a necessity, while social areas, recycling opportunities, and solid pathways were emphasised as particularly desirable. Crucial to the consideration as a place to visit, urban green space facilities must be of a good standard and in good order. Broken or poor quality facilities should be removed to improve attractiveness and to avoid accidents.

Work or study obligations mean we cannot leave our buildings.

It is understood that some workplace or study activities are more suited to an indoor environment. Sensitive meetings, or actions which need high levels of concentration, might benefit from the privacy afforded by an indoor environment. However, some activities might be transported outdoors. In order to be taken into urban green spaces, work and study must have access to similar if not the same facilities. The provision of seating, benches, laptops, shading, internet access, and transferrable phone lines could enable the relatively simple mechanisms of attending to emails, reading, writing, and marking for some. Larger group activities might be aided by providing bespoke lecture space or study areas with appropriate seating, outdoor video screens, and access to other facilities.

From an institutional practice perspective, administrations might provide support and encouragement to promote the use of urban green space as an alternative option. Provision of suitable facilities should be in tandem with the administrative flexibility to take work outdoors, with an institutionalised, positive approach towards doing so. Organisation leaders might lead by example, by prominently legitimising the use of urban green space as a work option.

Unsuitable weather conditions deter us.

The overriding condition which dictates whether or not we might elect to use urban green space or not is the weather: participants exclaimed that no matter what facilities were provided in urban green space, if the weather was not agreeable, they would not spend time outdoors. Weather does not need to be extreme to be unsuitable: mild changes in temperature or windspeed can be enough to make conditions inappropriate depending upon our activities, clothing, or schedules. However, lighter conditions can provide the opportunity to get outdoors for a period of time, and appropriate facilities can augment the experience.

Green space managers might provide cover to combat light rain showers, shade from intense sunlight, or to windbreak. Cover need not necessarily comprise of permanent fixtures: pop up gazebo style structures could help spaces to become multi-seasonal options.

An advertised change in clothing policy for staff members could present more opportunities to remain outdoors. It is recognised that academic institutions have a relatively relaxed attitude towards work attire, though more might be done to offer choice dependent on

weather conditions. Although traditional collar and tie is not compulsory wear for most in academia, policy might be altered to allow, for example, shorts in hot weather, or showerproof clothing in spring. Educating potential users in ways to dress appropriately for weather conditions could mean more people actively do so, increasing the likelihood of green space use.

5.5 - An agenda for mitigation and intervention into urban green space planning and policy

By highlighting problem areas and using practice theory as a lens to reframe the unit of enquiry, it is possible to attend specifically to the associated intricacies. Table 4 presents an agenda which identifies overarching themes covering potential practices which could be performed in urban green space, offers potential mitigation of barriers preventing routine engagement, and recommends interventions into policy frameworks. This agenda for change has been suggested by the elemental gaps in identified practices, and by the inherent barriers presented by thematic analysis. The table is formatted to express acknowledgement of the complexity of introducing change to established practices, and presents solutions to component elements.

Area of Practice	Elements of Practice		
	Materials	Meanings	Competences
Work and Study	Provide resources and amenities (shelter, power, seating, tables, wifi). Issue staff laptops and mobile phone. Provide quiet zones. Provide lecture space and facilities.	Normalise outdoor working by example. Institutionalise an academic schedule for use. Promote a culture of working outside. Allow weather condition suitable clothing.	Manage time and workload. Prioritise task importance. Learn to access technology outdoors. Provide education into all of the above.

Eating and Breaks	Provide resources and amenities (shelter, seating, tables, bins). Introduce retail opportunities. Provide distinctive smoking areas with facilities.	Promote restorative effects of green space 'injections' on mental health. Ensure environment is clean, tidy, and therefore attractive.	Prepare food and equipment in advance. Courteous use of waste facilities. Provide education into all of the above.
Socialising and Relaxing	Provide resources and amenities (shelter, seating). Provide tranquil zones, use screening. Deliver an attractive setting. Install security measures, lighting, information signposts.	Create a safe and welcoming environment through the promotion of considerate behaviours. Promote communal use of space. Create diverse social opportunities.	Arrange meeting times. Understand value of mental health restoration. Know how to psychologically switch off, and back on. Provide education into all of the above.
Sport and Leisure	Design space to incorporate sport and leisure functionality (pathways, apparatus) Provide access to equipment. Designate appropriate space for certain practices at certain times. Provide washroom facilities.	Promote physical exercise and benefits.	Time management. Proficiency in effective and safe use of equipment and facilities. Personal hygiene awareness. Provide education into all of the above.

Events and Entertainment	Design pedestrianised spaces with suitable ground surface. Deliver and promote wide range of events. Offer opportunities for individuals or groups to host events. Provide temporary use of equipment (stalls, tables, amplifiers, advertising mediums).	Create and promote culture of activity interest in urban green space. Access and involve social and community groups with associated interests.	Understanding timetables. Advertising and marketing knowledge. Events organisation and coordination. Provide education into all of the above.
Access, Travel and Commuting	Provide information signposts. Provide appropriate footpaths (material and directional). Remove physical barriers and create access points, bridges.	Promote walking. Allow for walking time in scheduling.	Map reading. Time management. Provide education into all of the above.

Table 5 - Agenda for mitigation and intervention to improve routine engagement with urban green space.

Chapter 6 – Conclusion

This chapter concludes the project report by capturing the key findings uncovered by the research and by considering the implications for impact. Ideas for further associated research are suggested.

Key Findings

This research project was successful in achieving its core aim: to identify barriers which inhibit routine engagement with urban green space. Moreover, using practice theory allowed a deep exploration of common associated practices, producing an agenda for changes to policy and practice which could help to improve the routinised utilisation of these spaces.

The site survey revealed that all the participants had access to urban green spaces which offered a wide range of amenity and facility. Most of the reasons given for not engaging with nearby green spaces might be addressed by attending to the material elements of each issue (described in table 4), however, an overriding attitudinal impression suggested a deeper fundamental barrier than the more superficial tangible complaints. The participants were acquiescent with the study, in that they all held the opinion that engaging with urban green space was undoubtedly good for them in many ways. Nevertheless, by their own admission, they did not utilise the available provision as much as they felt they should: available facilities and environmental qualities appeared to have no real impact upon this factor. The data suggested that participants were not explicitly avoiding green space, rather they did not even register these spaces as an option, or they felt green space was not for them to use because doing so would be considered strange (by themselves or by others).

The former point echoes Hitchings (2013) observation that green spaces might just be forgotten by those with an opportunity to utilise them throughout their working day. Consequently, if policy makers aim to increase people's engagement with urban green space, more should be done to pull potential users in using changes to practice in tandem with providing useful, attractive resources. By reminding people of the existence of urban green space, and by promoting its utilisation through institutional and place marketing activities, more potential users might be persuaded into engaging and receiving the benefits more often.

The latter point is difficult to represent accurately, let alone mitigate. If practices performed in urban green space have negative, strange, or eccentric meanings attached, therefore producing different connotations for different groups, then changes in practice need to be specifically targeted towards those with inhibitions. It is recognised that all urban green spaces cannot be all things to all people, but by normalising associated practices it is more likely that more people will integrate (Cass and Falconbridge, 2016), in this case changing perceptions for the better and reducing associations of peculiarity.

An unexpected outcome resulting from the diary exercise was the revelation that participants became overtly aware of their engagement with green spaces. This may seem obvious at first: the objective of this part of the research was indeed to record participants engagement directly, but the exercise revealed that participants were noticing green space and aspects of it that hadn't registered with them before, even though they were familiar with their surroundings. Moreover, some participants began to consider their relationship with urban green space, volunteering useful information which had not been requested. Diary entries remarked upon how green space affected participants feelings, and of how being asked to record green space engagement actively changed their choice of walking routes and location to take more in. By actively acknowledging their green surroundings, participants became acutely aware of the possibilities to experience them more often.

This research project shows that the provision of good quality green space is not enough to entice people to use it routinely throughout their daily existence. It is therefore suggested that there must be a change in attitude towards green space use from both the decision makers and the potential users under their remit: this must be initiated and supported by the management of the institution in question itself. It is clear that such changes can only be successful with structural backing driven by the decision makers, so that green space use is promoted, encouraged, and ultimately institutionalised. If the decision makers attend to all of the elements of practices in need of change in an integrated way, material provision can be augmented, meanings can be redirected and attached, and potential users might be educated to increase competences, resulting in a holistic consideration of the solution.

The scope of the project restricted the length of time spent in the field, naturally delimiting the efficacy of the site survey. Although the primary data retrieved was useful in terms of auditing the tangible features of the study sites, it is acknowledged that more could reported about the incorporeal atmospheric elements of each area in terms of temporal and seasonal influences. It is assumed that seasonal conditions would have had an effect upon the final site assessments, though it is recognised from the data that inclement weather and low temperatures dramatically reduce the likelihood of people opting to spend time located in urban green spaces. Further research might consider temporal, seasonal, and meteorological influences on urban green space engagement, particularly regarding routine access and the practices performed within.

Furthermore, future research might take account of the impacts of making tangible, physical changes to urban green space on associated practices. Studies could concentrate on the 'before and after' to explore the effects of mitigation and intervention: this would be helpful in validating green space as an important component of the urban environment, thereby answering the call for further research in the field (highlighted in this project's literature review). Longitudinal studies which considered both the success of specific green spaces after remediation and the changes in behaviour of different targeted user groups could provide knowledge which might streamline future endeavours.

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Appendix

i – Recruitment Poster

University of Salford MANCHESTER

Environment and Life Sciences

Call for Research Participants

Towards an understanding of the barriers which prevent routine engagement with urban green space

Masters by Research Project under supervision of the University of Salford

Dear Potential Candidate,

Hello! I would like to invite you to take part in a local academic research project. The project concerns our involvement and engagement with Urban Green Space, particularly during 'office hours'. The focus is how, why, and if we use it. The research is open to students and staff under separated conditions, and your participation would be greatly appreciated.

What do I need to do?

All I would like you to do is complete a seven day diary to document associated practices and routines, take part in a focus group session with your contemporaries, and discuss any highlights with me directly. It will be easy enough to complete, and full instructions will follow!

The schedule for the project is:

- For one week, **8th to 14th of May, 2017**, fill out a digital diary.
- For an hour in May, 2017, participate in a follow up focus group session (date TBA).
- For one hour shortly after the focus group, explore some themes in an interview session with the researcher.

I hope you'll be interested in taking part in this project! It's a labour of love, obviously. In return for your help, you'll receive some experience in the creation of primary data, an insight into the academic process, and a warm glow of life satisfaction, knowing that you've contributed to the geographical scientific knowledge base. I can only really offer you tea and cake, and possibly some mild whimsy. The focus groups will be held on campus, at a time convenient for all.

In the interest of internal relations, it would be great if I could collaborate with fellow local academics. In the shadow of reduced research budgets and current political uncertainty, the promotion of local cooperation may strengthen working associations within our University, and help us to become more self-perpetuating. Let's help each other out!

Please contact me to confirm your interest, or with any questions or ideas you might have. I'll return with full information, instructions, and consent details. Thanks in advance!

Very best regards,

Simon Cryer **Simon Cryer** - s.cryer@edu.salford.ac.uk

Thank You for your Participation!

ii – Participant Information Sheet

University of Salford MANCHESTER

Geography and Environmental Management

Information Sheet

Towards an understanding of the barriers which prevent routine engagement with urban green space

Masters by Research Project under supervision of the University of Salford

Before you decide whether you wish to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being carried out and what your participation will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Please ask if anything is unclear or if you would like more information.

What is the purpose of this study?

This research aims to understand more about the preoccupations which prevent us from using our urban green spaces regularly.

In brief: engaging with green space has the potential to relieve stress and promote our physical and mental health. By using it, we can improve our wellbeing and reduce escalating pressures on our health services and associated economies.

The successful output from this research would involve recommendations for ways in which infrequent users of green space might be encouraged to participate more often. These recommendations may be suitable for policy makers, decision makers, urban landscape planners, social groups, institutions, commercial businesses, or individuals.

What am I being asked to do?

The project is concerned with how we interact with our green spaces in relation to our daily routines. The researcher is tasked with exploring habitual practices, social obligations, work or study pressures, clothing norms, eating habits, travel modes, attitudes towards 'the outdoors'…what we might consider to be mundane, but consideration of our routines could uncover much about our approach to green space use. Your requested input:

1. Keep a seven day diary.

The diary uses an easy format, includes instructions, and is provided by the researcher.

2. Participate in a subsequent focus group session.

The focus groups will be carried out at your University and will likely contain familiar faces.

3. Participate in a follow up interview.

You will be invited to elaborate on your contribution by participating in a semi-structured interview.

What about confidentiality?

In any published materials your identity will be anonymised – you will be given a pseudonym rather than using your real name. However, your actual words may be used in text form. All data will be stored in a manner compliant with the Data Protection Act, on a password protected computer, and locked in a secure office. You may request a copy of this data if you are interested.

Your responses will be treated with great discretion and will not be shared with third parties. To ensure safety and correct procedures are followed, auditors from the university are given permission to access the data without defying confidentiality.

It must be noted that other people at the research site who are also taking part in the study may be aware of your involvement, simply because the interview method is publically visible.

How will the data be used?

The research will be written up and used to provide valuable primary data content to support my Masters dissertation. If the work is deemed to be suitable, it may be adapted for publication in peer-reviewed academic journals, and used for teaching purposes. Individuals will not be identifiable in the report or in any later publications.

Please note that:

- You can decide to withdraw from the research at any point
- You need not answer questions that you do not wish to
- If you withdraw from the study all data will be withdrawn and destroyed if you so wish
- This research has obtained ethical approval from The University of Salford ethics committee. If you have a complaint about the way in which the researcher has carried out the research you are welcome to contact my programme supervisor:

  Dr Mags Adams
  Lecturer in Human Geography,
  Room 307, Peel Building,
  University of Salford,
  The Crescent,
  Greater Manchester,
  M5 4WT.
  m.adams@salford.ac.uk

Thank You for your Participation

Simon Cryer - s.cryer@edu.salford.ac.uk,

iii – Participant Consent Form

University of Salford MANCHESTER

Geography and Environmental Management

Consent Form

Title of Project: Towards an understanding of the barriers which prevent routine engagement with urban green space

Name of Researcher: Simon Cryer

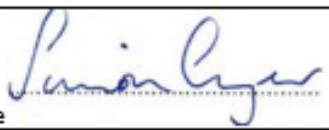
(Circle as appropriate)

➢ I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for the above study and what my contribution will be	**Yes**	**No**
➢ I have been given the opportunity to ask questions (face to face, via telephone and/or e-mail)	**Yes**	**No**
➢ I agree to take part in the research by completing a seven day diary, and by ➢ engaging in a focus group session	**Yes**	**No**
➢ I agree to being tape recorded during the focus group interview	**Yes**	**No**
➢ I am willing to undertake a follow up semi-structured interview	**Yes**	**No**
➢ I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw from the research at any time **without giving any reason**	**Yes**	**No**
➢ I understand how the researcher will use my responses, who will see them and how the data will be stored	**Yes**	**No**
➢ I understand that my name will not be used but that what I have said or written as part of this study will be used in reports, publications and other research outputs	**Yes**	**No**

Finally:

➢ **I agree to take part in the above study**	**Yes**	**No**
➢ **I am willing to be contacted about further research on this topic but understand that this forms no obligation on my part to participate in further research**	**Yes**	**No**

Signatures:

Participant Name:	Signature
Participant Address:	Email: Phone No:
Researcher taking consent: Simon Cryer s.cryer@edu.salford.ac.uk	 Signature
Date	

iv – Participant Diary (Redacted)

Dear Participant,

Firstly, thank you for taking the time and interest in this research project. It is hoped that the eventual output of this work will add to our existing knowledge in the field, and assist with future exploration. Your cooperation and input is crucial to the project's success, and is valued as highly as it is appreciated.

The research surrounds our everyday engagement with green spaces in the urban environment. We might walk through it on the way into work or university. We may hold an impromptu morning meeting on a near-by park bench. We might eat our lunch on the grass, under the shade of an old tree. Some of us might use green space as an exercise facility during the evening. We might not even see any green space at all.

This seven day diary is designed to capture a snapshot of your general day to day activities and practices. Review of the completed diaries will guide the schedule for the follow up focus group work.

Time Slot - The diary is organised into six loose blocks of time throughout the day, and your entry is required for each block. These blocks of time are designed to be flexible – we may have different daily schedules. For example, **On The Way In…** describes the time it takes for **you specifically** to get up, ready yourself, and arrive at wherever you should be for the day.

Activities - The diary would like you submit your routines and obligatory behaviours. These mundanities may seem dreadfully trivial, but they may reveal clues to some of the inherent barriers which prevent us from generally experiencing green space. What do you do throughout the day? Where do you do it?

Green Space and Other Comments – The diary asks you to consider any green spaces you've encountered, and describe how you used it (if at all!). Any further comments describing the space or related conditions would be useful. Please include anything which you think might be interesting: how the space made you feel; any sensory observations; perceptions of fear, safety, antisocial behaviour, and cleanliness; any particular facilities on offer; abundance or lack of other green space users; wildlife; general quality; even whether your clothing was suitable.

Please use the template below, expand it as you like, and return your entries by email. This project relies heavily on your considered input, and if you have any questions, queries, or comments, please contact me directly at s.cryer@edu.salford.ac.uk. I'll be happy to help! Again, I am delighted to have your interest, and thank you so much for your participation.

Very best regards,

Simon Cryer

EXAMPLE OF A DAILY ENTRY

Time Slot	**Activities** What did you do? Where? Who with?	**Green Space and Other Comments** Did you experience any? How? Please be descriptive – there are no right or wrong answers here!
On The Way In… Up and out to wherever you need to be. Breakfast, dog walking, cigarettes, exercise, travelling.	Up at six, breakfast, shower etc. Walked the dog. Got a lift to the train station. Packed train again. Ten minute walk through Manchester to the office.	Yes. 20 min walk with the dog to a local park area. Very nondescript. Size of a footy pitch, few trees, gravel paths, dog bins. No benches. Wore wellies and a big coat. Cold and wet overnight. Still dark this morning.
Morning First deeds of the day. Meetings, emails, brunch, work, coffee break.	Weekly prep meeting in the office, all staff. Followed by my desk job stuff - computers, phones, paperwork.... Grabbed a coffee with a colleague at the kiosk downstairs.	None encountered.
Lunchtime Midday break. Food, socialising, relaxing, location change, errands.	Half an hour or so. Brought a sandwich – had it at my desk. Read online news. Read Facebook. Browsed Amazon.	None.
Afternoon More daily deeds.	More desk work. Changed buildings part way through afternoon to collect invoices.	Yes! Passed through a maintained gardened area between buildings. Used a concrete path thoroughfare. Nice blue skies. People sat on benches, most on mobile phones.
On The Way Out The day is done? Travelling home, shopping, gym, socialising, errands.	Stopped in Manchester to buy Xmas presents. Took an hour to get home on the train. Got collected from the station and taken home by excellent husband.	None.
Evening Free time, family commitments, socialising, exercise, hobbies, work.	Minor housework. Tea, washing up, bath, TV. Bed.	None.

Name:

MONDAY Date: 8th May 2017

Time Slot	**Activities** What did you do? Where? Who with?	**Green Space and Other Comments** Did you experience any? How? Please be descriptive – there are no right or wrong answers here!
On The Way In… Up and out to wherever you need to be. Breakfast, dog walking, cigarettes, exercise, travelling.		
Morning First deeds of the day. Meetings, emails, brunch, work, coffee break.		
Lunchtime Midday break. Food, socialising, relaxing, location change, errands.		
Afternoon More daily deeds.		
On The Way Out The day is done? Travelling home, shopping, gym, socialising, errands.		
Evening Free time, family commitments, socialising, exercise, hobbies, work.		

v – Urban Green Space Data Collection Instrument

Urban Green Space Field Observation Sheet - QUALITIES (Adapted from Green Flag, 2016)

Rating Guide						
Very Poor	**Poor**	**Fair**	**Good**	**Very Good**	**Excellent**	**Exceptional**

Name of green space: **Date of visit:**

Criteria	Rating	Strengths, Weaknesses, Recommendations
A Welcoming Place? - Welcoming - Good and safe access - Signage - Equal access for all		
Healthy, Safe, secure? - Safe equipment and facilities - Personal security - Dog waste - Appropriate provision of facilities - Quality of facilities		
Clean and Well Maintained? - Litter and waste management - Grounds maintenance - Buildings and infrastructure maintenance - Equipment maintenance		

Users and Practical Uses? - Appropriate provision for community social opportunities - Provision for work, rest, and play - How are people using the space?		
Ambience and Sensory - Sounds - Smells - Tastes - Tactile - Visual		
Other - Provision of educational / promotion information - Evidence of sustainable practices		
Overall comments	Overall Rating	

Urban Green Space Field Catalogue - ELEMENTS (Adapted from various sources)

Rating Guide						
Very Poor	**Poor**	**Fair**	**Good**	**Very Good**	**Excellent**	**Exceptional**

Name of green space: **Date of visit:**

Aspect	Rating	Comments
Paved footpath		
Informal pathways		
Seating		
Secluded niches		
Tables		
W/C		
Drinking fountain		
Shops		
Play area		
Lighting		
Litter bins		
Sports/fitness facilities		
Wifi Access		
Wildlife		
Landscaping/gardens		
Shelter/shade		
Water feature		
Traffic/parking		
Sculpture/art		
Bike racks		
Green ground cover		
Security measures		
Electric point		
Openness		
Views of outside area		
Pollution		
Population		
Picnic area		
Gazebo / cover		
Others…		

vi – Focus Group Interview Schedule

Details removed from the participant name table. Italicised focus group questions indicate lines of enquiry designed to prompt interaction from the group, and are not necessarily crucial to the final data.

#	#
#	#
#	#
#	# Did not attend
#	# Did not attend

Table # - Participants names and attendance

Introduction and Welcome

Thank you for coming, and for taking part in this research exercise. My name is Simon Cryer, and your input will contribute to the successful completion of my Masters by Research Project. You'll be aware that the aim of the study is to understand further the barriers which prevent us from engaging with urban green space, and I'm particularly interested in our routines and practices which govern how and if we choose to use green space.

I'd like this focus group session to be an open discussion surrounding some of the existing themes of the topic, and some of the ideas which emerged from the analysis of the diary exercise that you undertook. The results from today will contribute towards a final semi-structured interview exercise, which I'll come to later. Once that's done, I've to figure out what it all means, write it all down, and present it as an original thesis. Easy.

Ground Rules

WE'RE ON A FIRST NAME BASIS.

I WOULD LIKE YOU TO DO THE TALKING. I would like everyone to participate. I may call on you if I haven't heard from you in a while.

THERE ARE NO RIGHT OR WRONG ANSWERS, only differing points of view. Every person's experiences and opinions are important. Speak up whether you agree or disagree. I want to hear a wide range of opinions. Negative comments are generally the most helpful in research!

WHAT IS SAID IN THIS ROOM STAYS HERE. I want you to feel comfortable sharing when sensitive issues come up. (I don't imagine we'll discuss anything particularly challenging.)

I WILL BE TAPE RECORDING THIS SESSION. I want to capture everything you have to say. I won't identify anyone by name in our report. You will remain anonymous.

WE'LL BREAK OUT about half way through for ten minutes, for the loo, ciggies, drink and cakes. Let me know if you need anything throughout!

Some of the questions might appear to be simple to answer, but hopefully they're designed to initiate an expansive discussion.

Questions

Let's begin! You all have your name cards in front of you to help us to remember each other's names. We'll loosen up first by going round the table. Please tell us your name, and what your perfect holiday would be if you had an unlimited budget.

1. *What do we think qualifies as an urban green space? (parks and gardens; verges; unused or un-adopted green space; plaza's with planters; managed/unmanaged; public/private; beer gardens)*

2. Can you tell me why green spaces might be considered important by urban planners? (Opportunities for social and civic enterprise; physical exercise; mental health restoration; environmental protection and promotion; habitat; eco-diversity; climate change amelioration; flood protection; heat dissipation; economic stimulation; = political stability) Do you think these spaces cater for all?

3. Can you tell me about the green space available to you near your place of study? (I suggest that the green space near to here includes: Peel Park; the space that runs by the main road; the space to the left of Newton front doors. What are the positives? What are the negatives?

4. Do you think that these spaces are accessible, and what would you do in them if they were? (study; relax; socialise; eat; sport)

5. How might these spaces be changed to attract you into them? (Outdoor seating, bins, café, no-smoking, smoking, wifi, 'clean' flooring, traffic screening, security, CCTV, sight lines; wildife).

6. Is it ever practical for you to work/study outdoors? What would you need? (Reading; outdoor sockets; IT and wifi; weather; distractions; seating/tables; do you dress for the outdoors)

7. Would you say you had sufficient access to green space at home? (within walking distance? Do you have a choice of space?)

8. What are the amenities like? Describe the quality. (Litter, graffiti, bins, paths, access, smells, sounds, anti-social behaviour? Sports, seating, picnic, wildlife, parking, food, toilets) – WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE INCLUDED?

9. All of you suggested that you experience green space in some way while travelling about (green space by proximity). Away from campus, would you say you make time to use urban green space? How? – (One of the principle reasons given for not accessing green space is that there is nothing to do once you're there.) Do you eat outdoors? (wildlide, sport, relax,)

10. Do you feel the need to travel to experience good quality green space? (large parks; countryside – Why use some UGS and not others?)

11. Can you think of a time when you've felt disinclined to enter a green area? (Safety, cleanliness, groups of people, antisocial behaviour, vandalism, repelled for any reason; negative aspects)

12. *Think about the smell of cut grass. How does that make you feel? (outdoor cleanliness; flies; muddy floor; damp;* ***OR*** *warm; sunny; family; healthy!!)*

13. *Think back over your entire life, and tell us your fondest memory involving urban green space*.

14. Has having to notice green space for this project had any lasting influence upon how you've perceived green space, or interacted with green space?

15. What changes could be made to urban green spaces to encourage more people to engage with them? (Policing CCTV, paths, entertainment, seating, IT access, social opportunity)

Prompts

Please can you explain further?

Could you give us an example?

Can you say more?

Thank you. What do other people think?

Let's have some other comments.

Finish

Thank you! I'll be in touch shortly by email with a demographic questionnaire. I appreciate your consent regarding further contact should I need it, and I might well be in touch.

vii – Semi-structured Interview Topic Guide

Interview Topic Guide

Topics to be covered underlined in bold, with prompts and possible areas for exploration included as bullet points. Urban Green Space abbreviated to UGS.

<u>Urban Green Space at Work</u>

- Can you tell me about the green space near to your work place? (Is it 'green'? List of identified UGS; discuss facilities, amenities; discuss qualities, negatives; discuss usage. 'Do you notice it?')
- Tell me about the access to green space that you have during working hours. (Enough? Easy?)
- Is it practical for you to work/study outdoors? What work could you do, and what would you need? (Reading equipment; outdoor sockets; IT and wifi; weather and shelter; distractions; seating/tables)
- Do you dress for the outdoors?
- Do you work from home, and do you take it outside?
- How do you think people are perceived by their peers when they work / break outside?
- How might your boss react if you decided to work, in some capacity, outside for a time? (reading; teaching; email; meetings)
- How could the green spaces near work be changed to encourage people to use it more? (Signage; activities and events; furniture; invitation)

<u>Urban Green Space at Home</u>

- Tell me about the green spaces near to your home. (Access; choice; walkability; size; possibly facilities and qualities)
- Can you talk about the facilities on offer and the qualities of the green spaces near to your home? (Sports, seating, picnic, wildlife, parking, food, toilets, litter, graffiti, bins, paths, access, smells, sounds, anti-social behaviour)
- What would you like to see improved or included?
- Do you travel to find green space away from work?

- Away from work, would you say you make time to use urban green space? How? What do you do? (One of the principle reasons given for not accessing green space is that there is nothing to do once you're there. Relaxing; socialising; sport and leisure.)
- (Do you work from home, and do you take it outside?)
- Do you need green space both at home and at work? Do you need UGS?

Perceptions and Attitudes

- Can you think of a time when you've felt disinclined to enter a green area? What might put you off entering urban green space? (Safety, cleanliness, groups of people, antisocial behaviour vandalism, fences and railings, deterred for any reason)
- How do you feel about UGS in the inner city? (Piccadilly Gardens; night time; no comment?)
- What changes could be made to urban green spaces to encourage more people to engage with them? (Policing and CCTV, paths, entertainment, seating, cleaning services, video screen, wifi, illumination)
- Has having to notice green space for this project had any lasting influence upon how you've perceived green space, or interacted with green space?

viii – Ethics Approval

Research, Innovation and Academic Engagement Ethical Approval Panel

Research Centres Support Team
G0.3 Joule House
University of Salford
M5 4WT

T +44(0)161 295 5278

www.salford.ac.uk/

10 March 2017

Dear Simon,

RE: ETHICS APPLICATION ST1617-32 - Towards an understanding of the barriers which prevent routine engagement with urban green space

Based on the information you provided, I am pleased to inform you that your application ST1617-32 has been approved.

If there are any changes to the project and/ or its methodology, please inform the Panel as soon as possible by contacting S&T-ResearchEthics@salford.ac.uk

Yours sincerely,

Dr Anthony Higham
Chair of the Science & Technology Research Ethics Panel
School of Built Environment
University of Salford
Maxwell Building, The Crescent
Greater Manchester, UK M5 4WT
Phone: + 44 161 295 6904
Email: A.P.Higham@salford.ac.uk
www.salford.ac.uk/ethics

ix – Demographic Survey

Dear ###

Thank you again for your contribution to the research process. Please could I ask you to you complete and return the demographic survey included below? Demographic questions are used to help qualitative researchers determine what factors may influence a respondent's answers, interests, and opinions. Collecting demographic information will enable me to cross-tabulate and compare subgroups (if there are any) to see how responses vary between these groups.

Typically, the information will be entirely anonymised throughout this research. Please ask if you require further information. You simply do not need to answer any question if you do not wish to.

I need to know a little bit about you. Please could you describe, in your own words, your:

Age =

Ethnicity origin (or Race) =

Gender =

Marital status =

Gender of your preferred partner =

Size of family =

Employment status =

Religion =

Education =

Thank you for your assistance.

Very best regards,

Simon